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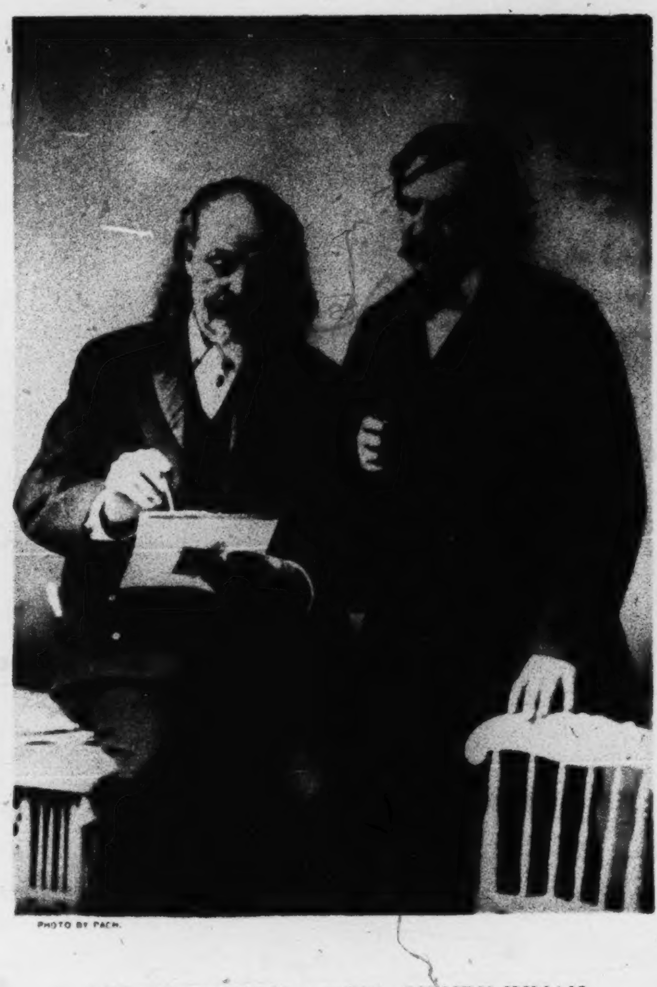

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COL. W. F. CODY and COL. HENRY INMAN

THE

GREAT SALT LAKE TRAIL

BY

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AUTHOR OF "THE OLD SANTA FÉ TRAIL," ETC.

AND

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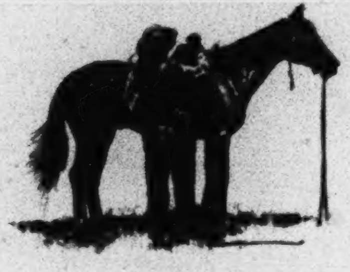
"*Buffalo Bill*"
LATE CHIEF OF SCOUTS



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PREFACE

THERE are seven historic trails crossing the great plains of the interior of the continent, all of which for a portion of their distance traverse the geographical limits of what is now the prosperous commonwealth of Kansas.

None of these primitive highways, however, with the exception of that oldest of all to far-off Santa Fé, has a more stirring story than that known as the Salt Lake Trail.

Over this historical highway the Mormons made their lonely Hegira to the valley of that vast inland sea. On its shores they established a city, marvellous in its conception, and a monument to the ability of man to overcome almost insuperable obstacles — the product of a faith equal to that which inspired the crusader to battle to the death for the possession of the Holy Sepulchre.

Over this route, also, were made those world-renowned expeditions by Fremont, Stansbury, Lander, and others of lesser fame, to the heart of the Rocky Mountains, and beyond, to the blue shores of the Pacific Ocean.

Over the same trackless waste the Pony Express executed those marvellous feats in annihilating distance, and the once famous Overland Stage lumbered along through the seemingly interminable desert of sage-brush and alkali dust — *avant-courières* of the telegraph and the railroad.

One of the collaborators of this volume, Colonel W. F. Cody ("Buffalo Bill"), began his remarkable career, as a boy, on the Salt Lake Trail, and laid the foundations of a life which has made him a conspicuous American figure at the close of this century.

It is not the intention of the authors of this work to deal in the slightest manner with Mormonism as a religion. An immense mass of literature on the subject is to be found in every public library, both in its defence and in its condemnation. The latter preponderates, and often seems to be inspired by an inexcusable ingenuity in exaggeration.

Of the trials of the Mormons during their toilsome march and their difficulties with the government during the Civil War, this work will treat in a limited way, but its scope is to present the story of the Trail in the days long before the building of a railroad was believed to be possible. It will deal with the era of the trapper, the scout, the savage, and the passage of emigrants to the gold fields of California — when the only route was by the overland trail — and with the adventures which marked the long and weary march.

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THE GREAT SALT LAKE TRAIL

CHAPTER I

PROPOSED EXPLORING EXPEDITION ACROSS THE NORTHERN PART OF THE CONTINENT IN 1774 — SIR ALEXANDER MACKENZIE'S EXPEDITION — THE EXPEDITION OF LEWIS AND CLARKE — HUNT'S TOUR IN 1810 — MARCH OF ROBERT STUART EASTWARDLY

AS early as a hundred and thirty-five years ago, shortly after England had acquired the Canadas, Captain Jonathan Carver, who had been an officer in the British provincial army, conceived the idea of fitting out an expedition to cross the continent between the forty-third and forty-sixth degrees of north latitude. His intention was to measure the breadth of North America at its widest part, and to find some place on the Pacific coast where his government might establish a military post to facilitate the discovery of a "northwest passage," or a line of communication between Hudson's Bay and the Pacific Ocean.

In 1774 he was joined in his proposed scheme by Mr. Richard Whitworth, a member of the British Parliament, and a man of great wealth. Their plan was to form a company of fifty or sixty men, and with them to travel up one of the forks of the Missouri River, explore the mountains, and find the source of the Oregon. They intended to sail down that stream to its mouth, erect a fort, and build vessels to enable them to continue their discoveries by sea.

Their plan was sanctioned by the English government, but the breaking out of the American Revolution defeated the bold project. This was the first attempt to explore the wilds of the interior of the continent.

Thirty years later Sir Alexander Mackenzie crossed the continent on a line which nearly marks the fifty-third degree of north latitude. Some time afterwards, when that gentleman published the memoirs of his expedition, he suggested the policy of opening intercourse between the two oceans. By this means, he argued, the entire command of the fur trade of North America might be obtained from latitude forty-eight north, to the pole, excepting in that territory held by Russia. He also prophesied that the relatively few American adventurers who had been enjoying a monopoly in trapping along the Northwest Coast would instantly disappear before a well-regulated trade.

The government of the United States was attracted by the report of the English nobleman, and the expedition of Lewis and Clarke was fitted out. They accomplished in part what had been projected by Carver and Whitworth. They learned something of the character of the region heretofore regarded as a veritable *terra incognita*.

On the 14th of May, 1804, the expedition of Lewis and Clarke left St. Louis, following the course of the Missouri River, and returning by the same route two years later.

There were earlier explorations, far to the south, but none of them reached as high up as the Platte. Lewis and Clarke themselves merely viewed its mouth.

In 1810 a Mr. Hunt, who was employed by the Northwest Fur Company, and Mr. Donald M'Kenzie, with a number of trappers under their charge, were to make a journey to the interior of the continent, but, hampered by the opposition of the Missouri Fur Company, they were compelled to abandon the enterprise, and it was not until the beginning of 1812 that their historic journey was commenced.

On the 17th of January, while their boats landed at one of the old villages established by the original French colonists of the region then known as the Province of Louisiana, they met the celebrated Daniel Boone, who was then in his eighty-fifth year, and the next morning they were visited by John Coulter, who had been with Lewis and Clarke on their memorable expedition eight years previously.[1] Since the return of Lewis and Clarke's expedition, Coulter had made a wonderful journey on his own account. He floated down the whole length of the Missouri River in a small canoe, accomplishing the passage of three thousand miles in a month.

On the 8th of April Hunt's party came in sight of Fort Osage,[2] where they remained for three days, and were delightfully entertained by the officers of the garrison. On the 10th they again embarked and ascended the Missouri. On the 28th the party landed at the mouth of the Platte and ate their breakfast on one of the islands there.

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[1] This John Coulter was the first white man to see and describe the wonders of what is now the National Park. His account, however, was received as a frontier lie, and the truth of his statements were not verified until long after the hardy adventurer's death.

[2] Fort Osage, on the Missouri River, was on the site of the present town of Sibley, where the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fé Railroad crosses that stream.

After passing the mouth of the river Platte, they camped on its banks a short distance above Papillion Creek. On the 10th of May they reached the village of the Omahas, camped in its immediate neighbourhood, and on the 15th of the same month they started for the interior of the continent. Their route lay far north of a line drawn parallel to the Platte Valley, but they entered it after travelling through the Black Hills, somewhere near the headwaters of the river from which the beautiful valley takes its name. After untold hardships and sufferings the party arrived at Astoria on the following February, having travelled a distance of thirty-five hundred miles. They had taken a circuitous route, for Astoria is only eighteen hundred miles, in a direct line, from St. Louis.

The first authentic account of an expedition through the valley of the Platte was that of Mr. Robert Stuart, in the employ of John Jacob Astor. He was detailed to carry despatches from the mouth of the Columbia to New York, informing Mr. Astor of the condition of his venture on the remote shores of the Pacific. The mission entrusted to Mr. Stuart was filled with perils, and he was selected for the dangerous duty on account of his nerve and strength. He was a young man, and although he had never crossed the Rocky Mountains, he had already given proofs, on other perilous expeditions, of his competence for the new duty. His companions were Ben Jones and John Day,[1] both Kentuckians, two Canadians, and some others who had become tired of the wild life, and had determined to go back to civilization.

They all left Astoria on the 29th of June, 1812, and reached the headwaters of the Platte, thence they travelled down the valley to its mouth, and embarked in boats for St. Louis.

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[1] John Day was a remarkable man. His life was full of wonderful adventures. He became insane while on this expedition of Stuart's, and was sent back to Astoria, but shortly afterwards he died there. The well-known John Day's River was so called in his honour.

When they reached the Snake River deserts, great sandy plains stretched out before them. Only occasionally were there intervales of grass, and the miserable herbage was saltweed, resembling pennyroyal. The desponding party looked in vain for some relief from the lifeless landscape. All game had apparently shunned the dreary, sun-parched waste, but hunger was now and then appeased by a few fish which they caught in the streams, or some sun-dried salmon, or a dog given to them by the kind-hearted Shoshones whose lodges they sometimes came across.

At last the party tired of this weary route. They determined to leave the banks of the barren Snake River, so, under the guidance of a Mr. Miller who had previously trapped in that region, they were conducted across the mountains and out of the country of the dreaded Blackfeet. Miller soon proved a poor guide, and again the party became bewildered among rugged hills, unknown streams, and the burned and grassless prairies.

Finally they arrived on the banks of a river, on which their guide assured them he had trapped, and to which they gave the name of Miller, but it was really the Bear River which flows into Great Salt Lake. They continued along its banks for three days, subsisting very precariously on fish.

They soon discovered that they were in a dangerous region. One evening, having camped rather early in the afternoon, they took their fishing-tackle and prepared to fish for their supper. When they returned to their camp, they were surprised to see a number of savages prowling round. They proved to be Crows, whose chief was a giant, very dark, and looked the rogue that they found him to be.

He ordered some of his warriors to return to their camp, near by, and bring buffalo meat for the starving white men. Notwithstanding the apparent kindness of this herculean chief, there was something about him that filled the white men with distrust. Gradually the number of his warriors increased until there were over a score of them in camp. They began to be inquisitive and troublesome, and the whites felt great concern for their horses, each man keeping a close watch upon the movements of the Indians.

As no unpleasant demonstrations had been made by the savages, and as the party had bought all the buffalo meat they had brought, Mr. Stuart began to make preparations in the morning for his departure. The savages, however, were for further dealings with their newly found pale friends, and above everything else they wanted gunpowder, for which they offered to trade horses. Mr. Stuart declined to accommodate them. At this they became more impudent, and demanded the powder, but were again refused.

The gigantic chief now stepped forward with an important air, and slapping himself upon the breast, he gave the men to understand that he was a chief of great power. He said that it was customary for great chiefs to exchange presents when they met. He therefore requested Mr. Stuart to dismount and give him the horse he was riding. Mr. Stuart valued the animal very highly, so he shook his head at the demand of the savage. Upon this the Indian walked up, and taking hold of Mr. Stuart, began to push him backward and forward in his saddle, as if to impress upon him that he was in his power.

Mr. Stuart preserved his temper and again shook his head negatively. The chief then seized the bridle, gave it a jerk that scared the horse, and nearly brought Mr. Stuart to the ground. Mr. Stuart immediately drew his pistol and presented it at the head of the impudent savage.

Instantly his bullying ended, and he dodged behind the horse to get away from the intended shot. As the rest of the Crow warriors were looking on at the movement of their chief, Mr. Stuart ordered his men to level their rifles at them, but not to fire. Upon this demonstration the whole band incontinently fled, and were soon out of sight.

The chief, finding himself alone, with true savage dissimulation began to laugh, and pretended the whole affair was intended only as a joke. Mr. Stuart did not relish this kind of joking, but it would not do to provoke a quarrel; so he joined the chief in his laugh with the best grace he could affect, and to pacify the savage for his failure to procure the horse, gave him some powder, and they parted professedly the best of friends.

It was discovered, after the savage had cleared out, that they had managed to steal nearly all the cooking utensils of the party.

To avoid meeting the savages again, Mr. Stuart changed his route farther to the north, leaving Bear River, and following a large branch of that stream which came down from the mountains. After marching twenty-five miles from the scene of their meeting with the Crows, they camped, and that night hobbled all their animals. They preserved a strict guard, and every man slept with his rifle on his arm, as they suspected the savages might attempt to stampede their horses.

Next day their course continued northward, and soon their trail began to ascend the hills, from the top of which they had an extended view of the surrounding country. Not the sign of an Indian was to be seen, but they did not feel secure and kept a very vigilant watch upon every ravine and defile as they approached it. Making twenty-one miles that day, they encamped on the bank of another stream still running north. While there an alarm of Indians was given, and instantly every man was on his feet with rifle ready to sell his life only at the greatest cost. Indians there were, but they proved to be three miserable Snakes, who were no sooner informed that a band of Crows were in the neighbourhood, than they ran off in great trepidation.

Six days afterward they encamped on the margin of Mud River, nearly a hundred and fifty miles from where they had met the impudent Crows. Now the party began to believe themselves beyond the possibility of any further trouble from them, and foolishly relaxed their usual vigilance. The next morning they were up at the first streak of day, and began to prepare their breakfast, when suddenly the cry of "Indians! Indians! to arms! to arms!" sounded through the camp.

In a few moments a mounted Crow came riding past the camp, holding in his hand a red flag, which he waved in a furious manner, as he halted on the top of a small divide. Immediately a most diabolical yell broke forth from the opposite side of the camp where the horses were picketed, and a band of paint-bedaubed savages came rushing to where they were feeding. In a moment the animals took fright and dashed towards the flag-bearer, who vigorously kicked the flanks of his pony, and loped off, followed by the stampeded animals which were hurried on by the increasing yells of the retreating savages.

When the alarm was first given, Mr. Stuart's men seized their rifles and tried to cut off the Indians who were after their horses, but their attention was suddenly attracted by the yells in the opposite direction. The savages, as they supposed, intended to make a raid on their camp equipage, and they all turned to save it. But when the horses had been secured the reserve party of savages dashed by the camp, whooping and yelling in triumph, and the very last one of them was the gigantic chief who had tried to joke with Mr. Stuart. As he passed the latter, he checked up his animal, raised himself in the saddle, shouted some insults, and rode on.

The rifle of one of the men, Ben Jones, was instantly levelled at the chief, and he was just about to pull the trigger, when Mr. Stuart exclaimed, "Not for your life! not for your life, you will bring destruction upon us all!"

It was a difficult matter to restrain Ben, when the target could be so easily pierced, and he begged. "Oh, Mr. Stuart, only let me have one crack at the infernal rascal, and you may keep all the pay that is due me."

"By heavens, if you fire, I will blow your brains out!" exclaimed Mr. Stuart.

By that time the chief was far beyond rifle range, and the whole daring band of savages, with all the horses, were passing out of sight over the hills, their red flag still waving and the valley echoing to their yells and demoniacal laughter.

The unhorsed travellers were dismayed at the situation in which they found themselves. A long journey was still before them, over rocky mountains and wind-swept plains, which they must now painfully traverse on foot, carrying on their backs everything necessary for their subsistence.

They selected from their camp equipage such articles as were absolutely necessary for their journey, and those things which they could not carry were cached. It required a whole day to make ready for their wearisome march. Next morning they were up at the break of day. They had set a beaver-trap in the river the night before, and rejoiced to find that they had caught one of the animals, which served as a meal for the whole party.

On his way back with the prize, the man who had gone for it, casually looking up at a cliff several hundred feet high, saw what he thought were a couple of wolves looking down upon him. Paying no attention to them, he walked on toward camp, when happening to look back, he still saw the watchful eyes peering over the edge of the precipice. It now flashed upon him that they might not be wolves at all, but Indian spies.

On reaching camp he called the attention of Stuart and his companions to what he had observed, and at first they too entertained the idea that they were wolves, but soon satisfied themselves that they were savages. If their surmises were true, the party was satisfied that the whereabouts of their caches were known, and determined that their contents should not fall into the hands of the savages. So they were opened, and everything the men could not carry away was either burned or thrown into the river.

On account of this delay they were not able to leave the place until about ten o'clock. They marched along the bank of the river, and made but eighteen miles in two days, when they were obliged to stop and build two rafts with which to cross the stream. Discovering that their rafts were very strong and able to withstand the roughness of the current, instead of crossing, they floated on down the river.

For three days they kept on, staying only to camp on land at night. On the evening of the third day, as they approached a little island, much to their joy they discovered a herd of elk. A hunter who was put on shore wounded one, which immediately took to the water, but being too weak to stem the current it was overtaken and drawn ashore.

As a storm was brewing, they camped on the bank where they had drawn up the elk. They remained there all the next day, protecting themselves as best they could from the rain, hail, and snow, which fell heavily. Now they employed themselves by drying a part of the meat they had secured; and when cutting up the carcass of the animal, they discovered it had been shot at by hunters not more than a week previously, as an arrow-head and a musket-ball were still in the wounds. Under other circumstances such a matter would have been regarded as trivial, but as they knew the Snake Indians had no guns, the presence of the bullet indicated that the elk could not have been wounded by one of them. They were aware that they were on the edge of the Blackfeet country, and as these savages were supplied with firearms, it was surmised that some of that hostile tribe must have been lately in the neighbourhood. This idea ended the peace of mind they had enjoyed while they were floating down the river.

For three more days they stuck to their rafts and drifted slowly down the stream, until they had reached a point which in their judgment was about a hundred miles from where they embarked.

The lofty mountains having now dwindled to mere hills, they landed and prepared to continue their journey on foot. They spent a day making moccasins, packing their meat in bundles of twenty pounds for each man to carry, then leaving the river they marched toward the northeast. It was a slow, wearisome tramp, as a part of the way lay through the bottoms covered with cottonwood and willows, and over rough hills and rocky prairies. Some antelope came within rifle range, but they dared not fire, fearing the report would betray them to the Blackfeet.

That day they came upon the trail of a horse, and in the evening halted on the bank of a small stream which had evidently been an Indian camping-place about three weeks ago.

In the morning when ready to leave, they again saw the Indian trail, which after a while separated in every direction, showing that the band had broken up into small hunting-parties. In all probability the savages were still somewhere in the vicinity, so it behooved the white men to move with the greatest caution. The utmost vigilance was exercised, but not a sign was seen, and at night they camped in a deep ravine which concealed them from the level of the surrounding country.

The next morning at daylight the march was resumed, but before they came out of the ravine on to the level prairie a council was held as to the best course to pursue. It was deemed prudent to make a bee-line across the mountains, over which the trail would be very rugged and difficult, but more secure. One of the party named M'Lellan, a bull-headed, impatient Scotchman, who had been rendered more so by the condition of his feet which were terribly swollen and sore, swore he had rather face all the Blackfeet in the country than attempt the tedious journey over the mountains. As the others did not agree with his opinion, they all began to climb the hills, the younger men trying to see who would reach the top of the divide first. M'Lellan, who was double the age of some of his companions, began to fall in the rear for want of breath. It was his turn that day to carry the old beaver-trap, and finding himself so far behind the others, he suddenly stopped and declared he would carry it no farther, at the same time throwing it as far down the hill as he could. He was then offered a package of dried meat in its place, but this in his rage he threw upon the ground, asserting that those might carry it who wanted it; he could secure all the food he wanted with his rifle. Then turning off from the party he walked along the base of the mountain, letting those, he said, climb rocks who were afraid to face Indians. Mr. Stuart and all his companions attempted to impress him with the rashness of his conduct, but M'Lellan was deaf to every remonstrance and kept on the way he had determined to go.

As they felt they were now in a dangerous neighbourhood, and did not dare to fire a rifle, they were compelled to depend upon the old beaver-trap for their subsistence. The stream on which they were encamped was filled with beaver sign, and the redoubtable Ben Jones set out at daybreak with the hope of catching one of the sleek fur animals. While making his way through a bunch of willows he heard a crashing sound to his right, and looking in that direction, saw a huge grizzly bear coming toward him with a terrible snort. The Kentuckian was afraid of neither man nor beast, and drawing up his rifle, let fly. The bear was wounded, but instead of rushing upon his foe as is usually the case with a wounded grizzly, he ran back into the thicket and thus escaped.

They were compelled to remain some days at this camp, and as the beaver-trap failed to supply them with food, it became absolutely necessary to take the chances of discovery by the Indians, in order to live, and Ben Jones was permitted to make a tour with his rifle some distance from the camp, defying both bears and Blackfeet. He had not been absent more than two hours when he came upon a herd of elk and killed five of them. When he reported his good news, the party immediately moved their camp to the carcasses, about six miles distant.

After marching a few days more, hunger again returned, the keenest of their sufferings. The small amount of bear and elk meat which they had been able to carry in addition to their other equipage lasted but a short time, and in their anxiety to get ahead they had little time to hunt. As scarcely any game crossed their trail, they lived for three days upon nothing but a small duck and a few miserable fish. They saw numbers of antelope, but they were very wild and they succeeded in killing only one. It was poor in flesh and very small, but they lived on it for several days.

After a while they came across the trail of the obstinate

M'Lellan, who was still ahead of them, and had encamped the night before on the very stream where they now were. They saw the embers of the fire by which he had slept, and remains of a wolf of which he had eaten. He had evidently fared better than themselves at this encampment, for they had not a mouthful to eat. The next day, about noon, they arrived at the prairies where the headwaters of the stream appeared to form, and where they expected to find buffalo in abundance. Not even a superannuated bull was to be seen; the whole region was deserted. They kept on for several miles farther, following the bank of the stream and eagerly looking for beaver sign. Upon finding some they camped, and Ben Jones set his trap. They were hardly settled in camp when they perceived a large column of smoke rising in the clear air some distance to the southwest. They regarded it joyously, for they hoped it might be an Indian camp where they could get something to eat, as their pangs of hunger had now overcome their dread of the terrible Blackfeet.

Le Clerc, one of the Canadians, was instantly despatched by Mr. Stuart to reconnoitre; and the travellers sat up till a late hour, watching and listening for his return, hoping he might bring them food. Midnight arrived, but Le Clerc did not make his appearance, and they lay down once more supperless to sleep, hoping that their old beaver-trap might furnish them with a breakfast.

At daybreak they hastened, eager and famishing, to the trap, but found in it only the forepaw of a beaver, the sight of which tantalized their hunger and added to their dejection. They resumed their journey with flagging spirits, but had not gone far when they perceived Le Clerc approaching at a distance. They hastened to meet him, in hope of tidings of good cheer. He had nothing to give them but news of that strange wanderer, M'Lellan. The smoke had arisen from his encampment which took fire while he was fishing at some little distance from it. Le Clerc found him in a forlorn condition. His fishing had been unsuccessful, and during twelve days that he had been wandering alone through the savage mountains he had found scarcely anything to eat. He had been ill, sick at heart, and still had pressed forward; but now his strength and his stubbornness were exhausted. He expressed his satisfaction that Mr. Stuart and his party were near, and said he would wait at his camp for their arrival, hoping they would give him something to eat, for without food he declared he should not be able to go much farther.

When the party reached the place they found the poor fellow lying on a bunch of withered grass, wasted to a skeleton, and so feeble that he could scarcely raise his head or speak. The presence of his old comrades seemed to revive him; but they had no food to give him, for they themselves were almost starving. They urged him to rise and accompany them, but he shook his head. It was all in vain, he said; there was no prospect of their getting speedy relief, and without it he would perish by the way; he might as well, therefore, stay and die where he was. At length, after much persuasion, they got him upon his legs; his rifle and other effects were shared among them, and he was cheered and aided forward. In this way they proceeded for seventeen miles, over a level plain of sand, until, seeing a few antelopes in the distance, they camped on the margin of a small stream. All now, that were capable of the exertion, turned out to hunt for a meal. Their efforts were fruitless, and after dark they returned to their camp famished almost to desperation.

As they were preparing for the third time to lie down to sleep without a mouthful of food, Le Clerc, one of the Canadians, gaunt and wild with hunger, approached Mr. Stuart with his gun in his hand. It was all in vain, he said, to attempt to proceed any farther without food. They had a barren plain before them, three or four days' journey in extent, on which nothing was to be procured. They must all perish before they could get to the end of it. It was better, therefore, that one should die to save the rest. He proposed, therefore, that they should cast lots, adding, as an inducement for Mr. Stuart to assent to the proposition, that he, as leader of the party, should be exempted.

Mr. Stuart shuddered at the horrible proposition, and endeavoured to reason with the man, but his words were unavailing. At length, snatching up his rifle, he threatened to shoot him on the spot if he persisted. The famished wretch dropped on his knees, begged pardon in the most abject terms, and promised never again to offend him with such a suggestion.

Quiet being restored to the forlorn encampment, each one sought repose. Mr. Stuart, however, was so exhausted by the agitation of the past scene, acting upon his emaciated frame, that he could scarcely crawl to his miserable bed, where, notwithstanding his fatigues, he passed a sleepless night, reflecting upon their dreary situation and the desperate prospect before them.

At daylight the next morning they were up and on their way; they had nothing to detain them, no breakfast to prepare, and to linger was to perish. They proceeded, however, but slowly, for all were faint and weak. Here and there they passed the skulls and bones of buffaloes. This showed that these animals must have been hunted there during the past season, and the sight of the bones served only to mock their misery. After travelling about nine miles along the plain, they ascended a range of hills, and had scarcely gone two miles farther, when, to their great joy, they discovered a superannuated buffalo bull which had been driven from some herd and had been hunted and harassed through the mountains. They all stretched themselves out to encompass and make sure of this solitary animal, for their lives depended on their success. After considerable trouble and infinite anxiety, they at length succeeded in killing him. He was instantly flayed and cut up, and so ravenous were they that they devoured some of the flesh raw.

When they had rested they proceeded, and after crossing a mountain ridge, and traversing a plain, they waded one of the branches of the Spanish River. On ascending its bank, they met about a hundred and thirty Indians of the Snake tribe. They were friendly in their demeanour, and conducted the starving trappers to their village, which was about three miles distant. It consisted of about forty lodges, constructed principally of pine branches. The Snakes, like most of their nation, were very poor. The marauding Crows, in their late excursion through the country, had picked this unlucky band to the bone, carrying off their horses, several of their squaws, and most of their effects. In spite of their poverty, they were hospitable in the extreme, and made the hungry strangers welcome to their cabins. A few trinkets procured from them a supply of buffalo meat, together with leather for moccasins, of which the party were greatly in need. The most valuable prize obtained from them, however, was a horse. It was a sorry old animal in truth, and it was the only one which remained to the poor fellows, after the fell swoop of the Crows. They were prevailed upon to part with it to their guests for a pistol, an axe, a knife, and a few other trifling articles.

By sunrise on the following morning, the travellers had loaded their old horse with buffalo meat, sufficient for five days' provisions, and, taking leave of their poor but hospitable friends, set forth in somewhat better spirits, though the increasing cold weather and the sight of the snowy mountains which they had yet to traverse were enough to chill their very hearts. The country along the branch of the river as far as they could see was perfectly level, bounded by ranges of lofty mountains, both east and west. They proceeded about three miles south, where they came again upon the large trail of the Crow Indians, which they had crossed four days previously. It was made, no doubt, by the same marauding band which had plundered the Snakes; and which, according to the account of the latter, was now camped on a stream to the eastward. The trail kept on to the southeast, and was so well beaten by horse and foot that they supposed at least a hundred lodges had passed along it. As it formed, therefore, a convenient highway, and ran in a proper direction, they turned into it, and determined to keep it as long as safety would permit, as the Crow encampment must be some distance off, and it was not likely those savages would return upon their steps. They travelled forward, all that day, in the track of their dangerous predecessors, which led them across mountain streams, and along ridges, through narrow valleys, all tending generally to the southeast. The wind blew cold from the northeast, with occasional flurries of snow, which made them camp early, on the sheltered banks of a brook. In the evening the two Canadians, Vallee and Le Clerc, killed a young buffalo bull which was in good condition and afforded them an excellent supply of fresh beef. They loaded their spits, therefore, and filled their camp kettle with meat, and while the wind whistled and the snow whirled around them, they huddled round a rousing fire, basked in its warmth, and comforted both soul and body with a hearty and invigorating meal. No enjoyments have greater zest than these, snatched in the very midst of difficulty and danger; and it is probable the poor wayworn and weatherbeaten travellers relished these creature comforts the more highly on account of the surrounding desolation and the dangerous proximity of the Crows.

The snow which had fallen in the night made it late in the morning before the party loaded their solitary pack-horse, and resumed their march. They had not gone far before the trail of the Crows, which they were following, changed its direction, and bore to the north of east. They had already begun to feel themselves on dangerous ground, in travelling it, as they might be descried by scouts or spies of that race of Ishmaelites, whose predatory life required them to be constantly on the alert. On seeing the trail turn so much to the north, therefore, they abandoned it, and kept on their course to the southeast for eighteen miles, through a beautiful undulating country, having the main chain of mountains on the left, and a considerable elevated ridge on the right.

That evening they encamped on the banks of a small stream, in the open prairie. The northeast wind was keen and cutting, and as they had nothing but a scanty growth of sage-brush wherewith to make a fire, they wrapped themselves in their blankets at an early hour. In the course of the evening M'Lellan, who had now regained his strength, killed a buffalo, but it was some distance from the camp, and they postponed supplying themselves from its carcass until morning.

The next day the cold continued, accompanied by snow. They set forward on their bleak and toilsome way, keeping to the northeast, toward the lofty summit of a mountain which it was necessary for them to cross. Before they reached its base they passed another large trail, a little to the right of a point of the mountain. This they supposed to have been made by another band of Crows.

The severity of the weather compelled them to encamp at the end of fifteen miles on the skirts of the mountain, where they found sufficient dry aspen trees to supply them with fire, but they sought in vain about the neighbourhood for a spring or rill of water. The next day, on arriving at the foot of the mountain, the travellers found water oozing out of the earth, and resembling, in look and taste, that of the Missouri. Here they encamped for the night, and supped sumptuously upon their mountain mutton, which they found in good condition.

For two days they kept on in an eastwardly direction, against wintry blasts and occasional storms. They suffered, also, from scarcity of water, having frequently to use melted snow; this, with the want of pasturage, reduced their old packhorse sadly. They saw many tracks of buffalo, and some few bulls, which, however, got the wind of them and scampered off.

On the 26th of October, they changed their course to the northeast, toward a wooded ravine in a mountain. At a small distance from its base, to their great joy, they discovered an abundant stream, running between willowed banks. Here they halted for the night. Ben Jones having luckily trapped a beaver and killed two buffalo bulls, they remained there the next day, feasting, reposing, and allowing their jaded horse to rest from his labours.[1]

Pursuing the course of this stream for about twenty miles, they came to where it forced a passage through a range of hills, covered with cedars, into an extensive low country, affording excellent pasturage to numerous herds of buffalo. Here they killed three cows, which were the first they had been able to get, having heretofore had to content themselves with bull-beef, which at this season of the year is very poor. The hump meat and tongues afforded them a repast fit for an epicure.

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[1] From an inspection of the map which accompanied Stuart's march, this stream was evidently the headwater of the North Fork of the Platte; but he was not aware of the fact.

It was now late in the season and they were convinced it would be suicidal to continue their journey on foot, as still many hundred miles lay before them to the Missouri River. The absorbing question now was where to choose a suitable wintering place; they happened the next day to come upon a bend of the river which appeared to be just the spot they were seeking. Here was a beautiful low point of land, covered by cottonwood, and surrounded by a thick growth of willow, which yielded both shelter and fuel, as well as material for building. The river swept by in a strong current about a hundred and fifty yards wide. To the southeast were mountains of moderate height, the nearest about two miles off, but the whole chain ranging to the east, south, and southwest, as far as the eye could reach. Their summits were crowned with extensive tracts of pitch-pine, checkered with small patches of the quivering aspen. Lower down were thick forests of firs and red cedars, growing out in many places from the very fissures of the rocks. The mountains were broken and precipitous, with huge bluffs protruding from among the forests. Their rocky recesses and beetling cliffs afforded retreats to innumerable flocks of the bighorn, while their woody summits and ravines abounded with bears and black-tailed deer. These, with the numerous herds of buffalo that ranged the lower grounds along the river, promised the travellers abundant cheer in their winter quarters.

On the 2d of November, they pitched their camp for the winter on the woody point, and their first thought was to obtain a supply of provisions. Ben Jones and the two Canadians accordingly sallied forth, accompanied by two other members of the party, leaving but one to watch the camp. Their hunting was uncommonly successful. In the course of two days they killed thirty-two buffaloes, and collected their meat on the margin of a small brook, about a mile distant. Fortunately the river was frozen over, so that the meat was easily transported to the encampment. On a succeeding day a herd of buffalo came trampling through the woody bottom on the river banks, and fifteen more were killed.

It was soon discovered, however, that there was game of a more dangerous nature in their neighbourhood. On one occasion Mr. Crooks wandered about a mile from camp, and had ascended a small hill commanding a view of the river; he was without his rifle, a rare circumstance, for in these wild regions, where one may at any moment meet a wild animal or a hostile Indian, it is customary never to stir out from the camp unarmed. The hill where he stood overlooked the spot where the killing of the buffalo had taken place. As he was gazing around, his eye was caught by an object below, moving directly toward him. To his dismay he discovered it to be a she grizzly with two cubs. There was no tree at hand into which he could climb, and to run would only be to invite pursuit, as he would soon be overtaken. He threw himself on the ground, therefore, and lay motionless, watching the movements of the animal with intense anxiety. It continued to advance until at the foot of the hill, where it turned, and made into the woods, having probably gorged itself with buffalo flesh. Mr. Crooks made all possible haste back to camp, rejoicing at his escape, and determined never to stir out again without his rifle. A few days afterwards a grizzly bear was shot at a short distance from camp by Mr. Miller.

As the slaughter of so many buffaloes had provided the party with beef for the winter, even if they met with no further supply, they now set to work with heart and hand to build a comfortable shelter. In a little while the woody promontory rang with the unwonted sound of the axe. Some of its lofty trees were laid low, and by the second evening the cabin was complete. It was eight feet wide, and eighteen feet long. The walls were six feet high, and the whole was covered with buffalo skins. The fireplace was in the centre, and the smoke found its way out by a hole in the roof.

The hunters were next sent out to procure deerskins for garments, moccasins, and other purposes. They made the mountains echo with their rifles, and, in the course of two days' hunting, killed twenty-eight bighorn and black-tailed deer.

The party now revelled in abundance. After all they had suffered from hunger, cold, fatigue, and watchfulness; after all their perils from treacherous and savage men, they exulted in the snugness and security of their isolated cabin, hidden, as they thought, even from the prying eyes of Indian scouts, and stored with creature comforts. They looked forward to a winter of peace and quietness; of roasting, broiling, and boiling, feasting upon venison, mountain mutton, bear's meat, marrow-bones, buffalo humps, and other hunters' dainties; of dozing and reposing around their fire, gossiping over past dangers and adventures, telling long hunting stories, — until spring should return; when they would make canoes of buffalo skins, and float down the river.

From such halcyon dreams they were startled one morning, at daybreak, by a savage yell, and jumped for their rifles. The yell was repeated by two or three voices. Cautiously peeping out, they beheld, to their dismay, several Indian warriors among the trees, all armed and painted in warlike style, evidently bent on some hostile purpose.

Miller changed countenance as he regarded them. "We are in trouble," said he, "these are some of the rascally Arapahoes that robbed me last year." Not a word was uttered by the rest of the party; they silently slung their powder-horns, ball-pouches, and prepared themselves for battle. M'Lellan, who had taken his gun to pieces the evening before, put it together in all haste. He proposed that they should break out the clay from between the logs, so as to be able to fire upon the enemy.

"Not yet," replied Stuart; "it will not do to show fear or distrust; we must first hold a parley. Some one must go out and meet them as a friend."

Who was to undertake the task? It was full of peril, as the envoy might be shot down at the threshold.

"The leader of a party," said Miller, "always takes the advance."

"Good!" replied Stuart; "I am ready." He immediately went forth; one of the Canadians followed him; the rest of the party remained in garrison, to keep the savages in check.

Stuart advanced, holding his rifle in one hand and extending the other to the savage who appeared to be the chief. The latter stepped forward and took it; his men followed his example, and all shook hands with Stuart, in token of friendship. They now explained their errand. They were a war-party of Arapahoe braves. Their village lay on a stream several days' journey to the eastward. It had been attacked and ravaged during their absence by a band of Crows, who had carried off several of their women and most of their horses. They were in quest of vengeance. For sixteen days they had been tracking the Crows about the mountains, but had not yet come upon them. In the meantime they had met with scarcely any game, and were half famished. About two days previously they had heard the report of firearms among the mountains, and on searching in the direction of the sound, had come to a place where a deer had been killed. They had followed the trail and it had brought them to the cabin.

Mr. Stuart now invited the chief and another, who appeared to be his lieutenant, into the cabin, but made signs that no one else was to enter. The rest halted at the door and others came straggling up, until the whole party, to the number of twenty-three, were gathered in front. They were armed with bows and arrows, tomahawks, scalping-knives, and a few had guns. All were painted and dressed for war, having a savage and fierce appearance. Mr. Miller recognized among them some of the very fellows who had robbed him the preceding year, and put his comrades on their guard. Every man stood ready to resist the first act of hostility, but the savages conducted themselves peaceably, and showed none of that swaggering arrogance which a war-party is apt to assume.

On entering the cabin, the chief and his lieutenant cast a wistful look at the rafters, hung with venison and buffalo meat. Mr. Stuart made a merit of necessity, and invited them to help themselves. They did not wait to be pressed. The beams were soon eased of their burden; venison and beef were passed out to the crew before the door. and a scene of gormandizing commenced which few can imagine who have not witnessed the gastronomical powers of an Indian after an interval of fasting. This was kept up throughout the day; they paused now and then, it is true, for a brief interval, but only to renew the charge with fresh ardour. The chief and the lieutenant surpassed all the rest in the vigour and perseverance of their attacks; as if, from their station, they were bound to signalize themselves in all onslaughts. Mr. Stuart kept them well supplied with choice bits, for it was his policy to overfeed them, and keep them from leaving the cabin, where they served as hostages for the good conduct of their followers. Once only in the course of the day did the chief sally forth. Mr. Stuart and one of the men accompanied him, armed with their rifles, but without betraying any distrust. He soon returned, and renewed his attack upon the larder. In a word, he and his worthy coadjutor, the lieutenant, ate until they were both stupefied.

Toward evening the Indians made their preparations for the night according to the practice of war-parties. Those outside of the cabin threw up two breastworks, into which they retired at a tolerably early hour, and slept like overfed hounds. As to the chief and his lieutenant, they slept inside, and in the course of the night they got up two or three times to eat. The travellers took turns, one at a time, to mount guard until morning. Scarcely had the day dawned when the gormandizing was renewed by the whole band, and carried on with surprising vigour until ten o'clock, when all prepared to depart. They had still six days' journey to make, they said, before they could come up with the Crows, who, they understood, were encamped on a river to the north. Their way lay through a hungry country where there was no game; they would, moreover, have but little time to hunt; they therefore craved a small supply of provisions for the journey. Mr. Stuart again invited them to help themselves. They did so with keen forethought, taking the choicest parts of the meat, and leaving the late plenteous larder almost bare. Their next request was for a supply of ammunition. They had guns, but no powder and ball. They promised to pay magnificently out of the spoils of their foray. "We are poor now," said they, "and are obliged to go on foot, but we shall soon come back laden with booty, and all mounted on horseback, with scalps hanging at our bridles. We will then give each of you a horse to keep you from being tired on your journey."

"Well," said Mr. Stuart, "when you bring the horses, you shall have the ammunition, but not before." The

Indians saw by his determined tone that all further entreaty would be unavailing, so they desisted, with a good-humoured laugh, and went off exceedingly well freighted, both within and without, promising to be back again in the course of a fortnight.

No sooner were they out of hearing than the luckless travellers held another council. The security of their cabin was at an end, and with it all their dreams of a quiet and cosey winter. They were between two fires. On one side were their old enemies, the Crows; on the other side, the Arapahoes, no less dangerous freebooters. As to the moderation of this war-party, they considered it assumed, to put them off their guard against some more favourable opportunity for a surprisal. It was determined, therefore, not to await their return, but to abandon with all speed this dangerous neighbourhood.

The interval of comfort and repose which the party had enjoyed in their cabin rendered the renewal of their fatigues intolerable for the first two or three days. The snow lay deep, and was slightly frozen on the surface, but not sufficiently to bear their weight. Their feet became sore by breaking through the crust, and their limbs weary by floundering on without a firm foothold. So exhausted and dispirited were they, that they began to think it would be better to remain and run the risk of being killed by the Indians, than to drag on thus painfully, with the probability of perishing by the way. Their miserable horse fared no better than themselves, having for the first day or two no other forage than the ends of willow twigs, and the bark of the cottonwood tree.

They all, however, appeared to gain patience and hardihood as they proceeded, and for fourteen days kept steadily on, making a distance of about three hundred miles.

During the last three days of their fortnight's travel, however, the face of the country changed. The timber gradually diminished, until they could scarcely find fuel sufficient for culinary purposes. The game grew more and more scanty, and finally none was to be seen but a few miserable broken-down buffalo bulls, not worth killing. The snow lay fifteen inches deep, and made the travelling grievously painful and toilsome. At length they came to an immense plain, where no vestige of timber was to be seen, not a single quadruped to enliven the desolate landscape. Here, then, their hearts failed them, and they held another consultation. The width of the river, which was nearly a mile, its extreme shallowness, the frequency of quicksands, and various other characteristics, had at length made them sensible of their errors with respect to it, and they now came to the correct conclusion that they were on the banks of the Platte. What were they to do? Pursue its course to the Missouri? To go on at this season of the year seemed dangerous in the extreme. There was no prospect of obtaining either food or fuel. The country was destitute of trees, and though there might be driftwood along the river, it lay too deep beneath the snow for them to find it.

The weather was threatening a change, and a snowstorm on these boundless wastes might prove as fatal as a whirlwind of sand on an Arabian desert. After much deliberation, it was at length determined to retrace their last three days' journey of seventy-seven miles, to a place where they had seen a sheltering growth of forest-trees, and where there was an abundance of game. Here they would once more set up their winter quarters, and await the opening of navigation to launch themselves in canoes.

Accordingly, on the 27th of December they faced about, retraced their steps, and on the 30th regained the part of the river in question.

They encamped on the margin of the river, in a grove where there were trees large enough for canoes. Here they put up a shed for immediate shelter, and at once proceeded to erect a cabin. New Year's Day dawned when but one wall of their cabin was completed; the genial and jovial day, however, was not permitted to pass uncelebrated, even by this weather-beaten crew of wanderers. All work was suspended, except that of roasting and boiling. The choicest of the buffalo meat, with tongues, humps, and marrow-bones, were devoured in quantities that would have astonished any one who has not lived among hunters and Indians. As an extra regale, having nothing to smoke, they cut up an old tobacco pouch, still redolent with the potent herb, and smoked it in honour of the day. Thus for a time, in present revelry, however uncouth, they forgot all past troubles and anxieties about the future, and their forlorn shelter echoed with the sound of gayety.

The next day they resumed their labours, and by the sixth of the month the cabin was complete. They soon killed abundance of buffalo, and again laid in a stock of winter provisions.

The party was more fortunate in this its second cantonment. The winter passed away without any Indian visitors; and the game continued to be plentiful in the neighbourhood. They felled two large trees, and shaped them into canoes, and, as the spring opened, and a thaw of several days melted the ice in the river, they made every preparation for embarking. On the 8th of March they launched forth in their canoes, but soon found that the river had not depth sufficient even for such slender barks. It expanded into a wide, but extremely shallow stream, with many sandbars, and occasionally various channels. They got one of their canoes a few miles down it, with extreme difficulty, sometimes wading, and dragging it over the shoals. At last they had to abandon the attempt, and to resume their journey on foot, aided by their faithful old packhorse, which had recruited strength during the winter.

The weather delayed them for several days, having suddenly become more rigorous than it had been at any time during the winter; but on the 20th of March they were again on their journey.

In two days they arrived at the vast naked prairie, the wintry aspect of which had caused them in December to pause and turn back. It was now clothed with the early verdure of spring, and plentifully stocked with game. Still, when obliged to bivouac on its bare surface, without any covering, by a scanty fire of buffalo chips, they found the night-blasts piercingly cold. On one occasion a herd of buffalo having strayed near their evening camp, they killed three of them merely for their hides, wherewith to make a shelter for the night.

They journeyed on for about a hundred miles, and the first landmark by which they were able to conjecture their position with any degree of confidence was an island about seventy miles in length, which they presumed to be *Le Grande Isle.*[1] They now knew that they were not a very great distance from the Missouri River, if their presumption was correct. They went on, therefore, with renewed hope, and on the evening of the third day met an Otoe Indian, who informed them they were but a short distance from the Missouri. He also told them of the war that had been progressing between the United States and England. This was news to them indeed, for during that whole period they had been beyond the possibility of learning anything of civilized affairs.

The Indian conducted them to his village, where they were delighted to meet two white trappers recently arrived from St. Louis. A bargain was now made with one of them, who agreed to furnish them with a canoe and provisions for the voyage, in exchange for their venerable traveller, the old horse. In a few days they started and arrived at Fort Osage, where they were again received hospitably by the officers of the garrison, and where they enjoyed that luxury, bread, which they had not tasted for over a year. Reëmbarking, they arrived in St. Louis on the 30th of April, without experiencing any further adventure worthy of note.[1]

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[1] Grand Island in the Platte River was thus originally named by the early trappers and voyageurs, the majority of whom were French Canadians.

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[1] See *Astoria*, by Washington Irving.

Indian Encampment

CHAPTER II

CAPTAIN EZEKIEL WILLIAMS' EXPEDITION TO THE PLATTE VALLEY IN 1807 — CHARACTER OF THE OLD TRAPPER — THE OUTFIT OF HIS MEN — CROSSES THE RIVER — IMMENSE HERDS OF BUFFALO — DEATH OF THEIR FAVOURITE HOUND — A LOST TRAPPER — A PRAIRIE BURIAL — A WOLF-CHASE AFTER A BUFFALO — AN INDIAN LOCHINVAR — THE CROW INDIANS — THEIR COUNTRY — ROSE, THE SCAPEGOAT REFUGEE — THE LOST TRAPPERS — A BATTLE WITH THE SAVAGES

ON the return of Lewis and Clarke's expedition from the Rocky Mountains where they had wintered with the Mandans, a celebrated chief of that tribe, Big White, was induced to accompany Captain Lewis to Washington in order that he might see the President, and learn something of the power of the people of the country far to the East.

The Mandans at that time were at war with the Sioux, and Big White was fearful that on his return to his own tribe some of the Sioux might cut him and his party off, so he hesitated at first to accept the invitation; but upon Captain Clarke assuring him that the government would send a guard of armed men to protect and convoy him safely to his own country, the chief assented, and took with him his wife and son.

In the spring of 1807, Big White set out on his return to the Mandan country. The promised escort, comprising twenty men under the command of Captain Ezekiel Williams, a noted frontiersman, left St. Louis to guard him and to explore the region of the then unknown far West.

Each man of the party carried a rifle, together with powder and lead to last him for a period of two years. They also took with them six traps to each person, for it was the intention of the expedition, after it had seen the brave Mandan safely to his own home, to hunt for beaver and other fur-bearing animals in the recesses of the vast region beyond the Missouri.

Pistols, knives, camp kettles, blankets, and other camp equipage necessary to the success of the expedition and the comfort of the men were carried on extra packhorses. He did not forget to take gewgaws and trinkets valued by the savage, as presents to the chiefs of the several tribes they might chance to meet.

It will be remembered by the student of history that the expedition of Lewis and Clarke was confined to the Missouri River. They went up that stream and returned by the same route, and as Lieutenant Pike started west in 1805, it is claimed that this expedition of Captain Williams, overland to the Rocky Mountains, was the second ever undertaken by citizens of the United States. The difficulties which they expected to encounter, having no knowledge of the country through which they were to pass, as may be surmised, were numerous and trying. When leaving the Mandan chief at his village, near the mouth of the Yellowstone, that excellent Indian gave the party some timely advice, and it prevented their absolute annihilation on several occasions. Captain Williams was especially urged to exercise the greatest vigilance day and night; to pay the strictest attention to the position of his camps and the picketing of his animals. He was told that, although the average Indian generally relied upon surprises on their raids, they were not rash and careless, rarely attacking a party that was prepared and on the lookout.

Captain Williams was a man of the most persistent perseverance, patience, and unflinching courage, coupled with that determination of character which has been the saving attribute of nearly all our famous mountaineers from the earliest days. His men, too, were all used to the privations and hardships that a life on the border demands, for Missouri, at the time of the expedition, was a wilderness in the most rigid definition of the term. All were splendid shots with the rifle, and could hit the eye of a squirrel whether the animal stood still or was running up the trunk of a tree.

The distance they travelled each day averaged about twenty-five miles. When they were ready to camp, they selected a position where wood and water were plentiful, and the grass good for their animals. For the first eight or ten nights they would kindle great fires, around which they gathered, ate the fat venison their hunters had killed through the day, and told stories of hunting and logging back in the mighty forests of Missouri. When they reached the region of the Platte they were forced to abandon this careless practice, for they were now entering a region infested by hostile savages, and they found it necessary to act upon the suggestions of the Mandan chief, and be constantly on their guard.

For the distance of about two hundred and fifty miles from the Missouri they did not find game very abundant, although they never suffered, as there was always enough to supply their wants. The timber began to thin out too, and they were obliged to resort for their fire to the *bois de vache*, or buffalo-chips.

One day, two of the hunters killed a brace of very fat deer close to camp, and when the animals were dressed and their carcasses hung up to a huge limb, the viscera and other offal attracted a band of hungry wolves. Not less than twenty of the impudent, famishing brutes battened in luxurious frenzy on the inviting entrails and feet of the slaughtered deer. The wolves were of all sizes and colours; those that were the largest kept their smaller congeners away from the feast until they were themselves gorged, and then allowed the little ones to gather up the fragments. While the latter were waiting their turn with a constant whining and growling, the dogs of the expedition barked an accompaniment to the howls of the impatient animals, and soon made a break for the pack. They chased them around the trees and out on the open prairie, when they turned upon the dogs and drove them back to camp. One of the most plucky of the dogs made a bold stand, but was seized by as many of the wolves as could get hold of him, and he was torn to shreds almost instantly.

The trappers did not want to waste any lead on the worthless animals, but in the darkness set some of their beaver-traps, which they baited with pieces of venison suspended just above them on a projecting limb of a tree. In the morning, when the trappers went out to look for their supposed victims, both the meat and the traps were gone. They had, in their inexperience, forgotten to fasten the traps to anything, and if any of the wolves were caught, they had walked off, traps and all!

While all were at breakfast, one of the mortified hunters, disgusted at the loss of his trap, went off with the intention of tracking the wolf that had carried it away, thinking perhaps if the animal had got rid of it he would find it on its trail. Sure enough, a wolf had been caught by this man's trap, and in dragging it along had left in the grass a very distinct trail, by which he was easily followed. He was tracked into a thicket of hazel, entrance to which was almost impossible, so rank and tangled was its growth. No doubt the wolf was alive, but how to recover his trap was an enigma to the hunter. He called the dogs and endeavoured to get them to go in, but, after their experience of the night before, they, with the most terrible howls, declined to make the attempt. Then it was observed that near the clump of hazel was a large oak-tree, from whose limbs an extended view of the centre of the thicket could be had. One of the hunters, at the suggestion of Captain Williams, climbed the tree, and shot the wolf with his rifle. The danger having passed, the wolf was dragged from his retreat, and it was discovered that one of his forefeet had been caught in the trap. He was an immense fellow, and nearly black in colour.

In the early days of the frontier, the following method was sometimes employed to rid a camp of wolves. Several fishhooks were tied together by their shanks, with a sinew, and the whole placed in the centre of a piece of tempting fresh meat, which was dropped where the bait was most likely to be found by the prowling beasts. The hooks were so completely buried in the meat as to prevent their being shaken off by the animal that seized the bait. It is an old trapper's belief that a wolf never takes up a piece of food without shaking it well before he attempts to eat it, so that when the unlucky animal had swallowed the wicked morsel, he commenced at once to howl most horribly, tear his neck, and run incontinently from the place. As wolves rarely travel alone, but are gregarious in their habits, the moment the brute has swallowed the bait and commenced to run, all make after him. His fleeing is contagious, and they seldom come back to that spot again. Sometimes the pack will run for fifty miles before stopping.

One night, while encamped on the Platte, five of their horses were missing when daylight came. At first they thought the Indians had run them off; but, on second thought, Captain Williams argued that the animals could not have been stolen. If the Indians had been able to take the five, they could as easily have taken the whole herd. This induced the men to go out and institute a search for the missing animals. Their trail, made very plain by the dew, was soon found in the grass, and soon all were returned to camp. The horses had cleared themselves of their hobbles, and were going off in the direction of their far-away home, and it was not until dark that the camp was reached. Thus a whole day was lost, but as they were yet within comparatively safe distance of the river, no harm resulted from their carelessness. Now greater caution must be observed, for their journey was to be a long one; it led through a region occupied by hostile tribes who would watch them with an energy possible only to the North American savage. The Indians would waylay them in every ravine, watch them every moment from the hilltops for the purpose of gaining an advantage, hoping always to surprise them, steal their horses, and take their scalps if possible.

From that day the company adopted new tactics; they travelled until an hour before sundown, then halted, unsaddled their animals, and picketed them out to graze. In the meantime their supper was prepared, the fires lighted, and, after resting long enough for their horses to have filled themselves, generally after dark, they were brought in, saddled, the fires were renewed, and the company would start on for another camp eight or ten miles away, before again halting for the night. Of course, at the new camp no fires were kindled, and the men rested in security from a possible attack by the savages.

One day the company came upon a band of friendly Kansas Indians who were out on an annual buffalo-hunt, and Captain Williams resolved to spend two or three days with this tribe, and indulge in a buffalo-hunt with them. The whole country through which they were now travelling was literally covered with the great shaggy monsters; thousands and thousands could be seen from every point. The buffalo had not yet been frightened. Early the next morning, a dozen of the Kansas Indians, splendidly mounted, with spears, bows, and arrows for weapons, with the same number of Captain Williams' men, started for the herd grazing so unsuspiciously a few miles off. The Indians were not only excellent hunters, but very superior horsemen, their animals familiar with the habits of the huge beasts they were to encounter, and well-trained in all the quick movements so necessary to a successful hunt. But it was not so with the men of Captain Williams' party. Many of them had never seen a buffalo before, and though skilful hunters in their native woods on the Missouri River, they were wholly unacquainted with the habits of the immense beasts they were now to kill. Their horses, too, were as unused to the sight of a buffalo as their riders, and in consequence were badly frightened at the first sight of the ungainly animals. The men, of course, used their rifles, which in those days were altogether too cumbersome for hunting the buffalo.

The party soon came in view of the herd, which was quietly grazing about a mile off. Then the men dismounted, cinched up their saddles, and getting their arms ready for the attack, in a few moments of brisk riding were on the edge of the vast herd. Every man picked out his quarry and dashed after it, the Indians selecting the bulls, as they were fatter at that time of year. The cows had calves at their sides and were much thinner. In a moment the very earth seemed to tremble under the sharp clatter of the hoofs of the now thoroughly alarmed beasts, and the sound as they dashed away was like distant thunder. The Indians and their horses seemed to understand their business at once. Advancing up to a buffalo, the savage discharged his bow and launched his spear with unerring aim, and the moment it was seen that a buffalo was mortally wounded, off he would ride to another animal, leaving the dying victim where it fell.

For more than two hours the hard work was kept up until a dozen or more of the huge bulls were dead upon the prairie within the radius of a couple of miles. The Indians had averaged more than a buffalo apiece, while Captain Williams' men had signally failed to bring down a single bull, because they were unable to handle their rifles while riding. In fact, several of the white men were carried away by their unmanageable animals for miles from the scene of the hunt. One was thrown from his saddle. One horse had in his mad fright rushed upon an infuriated bull that had been wounded, and was disembowelled and killed in a moment. Its rider was compelled to walk to the camp, deeply mortified at his discomfiture.

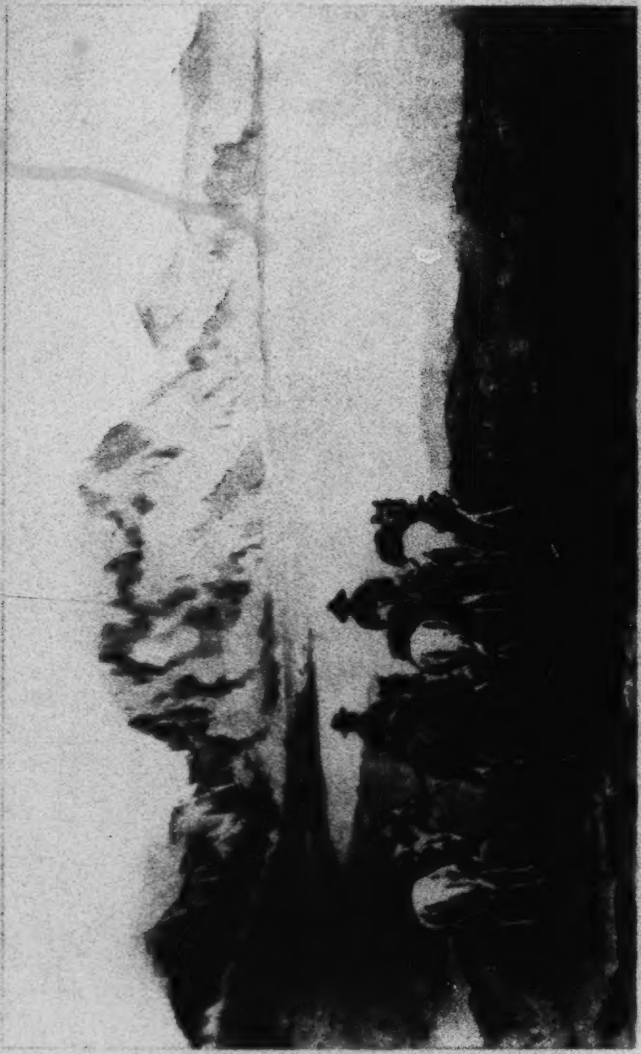
The savages invariably exercised an amount of coolness on a buffalo-hunt that would astonish the average white man. They never let an arrow fly until they were certain of its effect. Sometimes a single arrow would suffice to kill the largest of bulls. Sometimes, so great was the force given, an arrow would pass obliquely through the body, when a bone was not struck in its passage.

Captain Williams' party had now an abundance of delicious buffalo-meat, but it was at the expense of a horse, a considerable balance on the debtor side, considering the long and weary march yet to be made. Providence seems to have come luckily to the relief of the party at this juncture, for, one of the savages having taken a particular fancy to one of the dogs of the outfit, he offered to exchange a fine young horse for it. His offer was gladly acceded to by the captain. The Indian was pleased with the bargain, but not more so than the horseless hunter.

The next day Captain Williams crossed the Platte a short distance below the junction of the North and South Forks, and just before sundown, as usual, halted to graze the horses and prepare their evening meal. In a few moments the dog that had been exchanged for a horse came into camp, and appeared overjoyed to see his white friends again. A piece of buffalo-hide was attached to his neck. He had been tied, but had succeeded in gnawing the lariat in two, and thus made his escape, following the trail of the party he knew so well.

The region through which Captain Williams' party was now travelling was dotted with the various animals which at that early period were so numerous on the grand prairies of the Platte. Conspicuous, of course, were vast herds of buffalo, and near the outer edge of the nearest could be distinctly seen a pack of hungry wolves, eagerly watching for a chance to hamstring one of the superannuated bulls which stood alone, remote from all his companions, in all the misery of his forlorn abandonment.

In the afternoon, as the party were riding silently along the trail by the margin of the river, a rumbling, muffled sound was heard, like the mutterings of thunder below the horizon. One of the Indians whom Captain Williams had induced to accompany him for some distance farther into the wilderness, told him that the noise was made by a stampeded herd of buffalo, and the sound became clearer and more distinct. He believed the frightened animals were rushing in the direction of the company, and if his surmises were true, there was danger in store. For more than an hour the rumbling continued, sounding louder



and louder, until at last a surging, dark-looking mass of rapidly moving animals was visible on the horizon, seeming to cover the entire surface of the prairie as far as the eye could see.

There was but one thing to do; either the herd must be divided by some means, or death to all was inevitable. Accordingly the horses were hobbled, and the men rushed toward the approaching mass of surging animals, firing off their rifles as rapidly and shouting as loudly as they could. Luckily for the hunters, as the vast array of frightened buffaloes came toward them, the leaders, with bloodshot eyes, stared for a moment at the new object of terror, divided to the right and left, passing the now thoroughly alarmed men with only about fifty or sixty yards between them.

For more than an hour the hard work of yelling and firing off their rifles had to be kept up before the danger was over. The buffalo appeared to be more badly frightened at the yells of the Indian than at anything else that confronted them. One of the beautiful greyhounds belonging to the company became demoralized, and, running into the midst of the rushing herd as it passed by, was cruelly trampled to death in an instant.

In the early days it was generally believed that, when buffalo were seen stampeding in the manner described, they were being chased by Indians; and the party, surmising this to be the cause of the present onward rush of the animals, although getting short of their meat rations, did not deem it prudent to kill any, so the vast herd of the coveted animals was allowed to pass by without a shot being fired at them.

The delay caused by the stampede made the party very late in making their usual afternoon camp, and when they started on their hard march again, three of the men were detailed to hunt for game. They were told to join the company at a bunch of timber just visible low down on the western horizon, apparently about six miles distant, but as afterward proved it was much farther.

The men who were ordered out by the captain were warned to observe the strictest vigilance, and particularly not to separate from each other, as it was evident they were in a dangerous country, and their safety depended upon their keeping within supporting distance.

The main body of the party arrived at the bunch of timber about sundown, and partook of a very slight repast, as the meat, upon which they depended almost entirely, was nearly exhausted. About dark, however, two of the hunters who had left in the afternoon came into camp bringing with them a fine deer. They reported that their companion had left them to get a shot at a herd of elk a mile away, and while going after the deer which they had killed they lost sight of him. They also stated that they had seen three horsemen going in the direction which the missing man had taken. This painful news created the greatest alarm in the camp; it was too late and dark to go out in search of their missing comrade, and if he were still alive he would be compelled to remain entirely unprotected during the night on the prairie. The captain at first thought of kindling a large fire, hoping that the lost man would see the light and find his way in. As this plan would betray the presence of the whole party to any Indians who might be prowling about, it was wisely abandoned. So the little camp-fires were extinguished, and a double guard posted, for it was believed that, if the Indians had killed their comrade, they would be likely to attack the main camp at dawn, the hour usually selected for such raids.

The night passed slowly on; nothing disturbed the hunters except their anxiety for their lost comrade. At the faintest intimation of the coming dawn, ten of the party, including the two who had been with the missing man the previous afternoon, set out on their quest for their lost companion. They first went back to the spot where they remembered having last seen him, but there was not a sign of him; not even the track of his horse's hoofs could be seen. The men fired off their rifles as they rode along, and occasionally called out his name, but not a sound came back in response. At last they were rewarded by the sight of a horse standing in a bunch of willows. As they approached him, they were welcomed by his neighing. They then halted, and continued their shouting and calling by name, but not an answer did they get. They were now confirmed in their belief that their comrade had been killed by the Indians, who were in possession of his horse, and at that moment hidden in the bunch of willows before them. They were determined to know positively, so they approached the spot very cautiously, with their fingers on the triggers of their rifles, ready to repel an attack. When they had approached sufficiently near, they saw that the horse was carefully fastened to the brush, and a short distance away was Carson[1] lying down with his head resting on the saddle! At first the men thought him dead, but found out that he was only in a profound sleep, indeed, really enjoying the most delightful dreams. When they aroused him he appeared bewildered for a moment, but soon recovered his normal condition, and related his story to his now happy companions. He said that in his eagerness to get the elk he lost his bearings, and wandered about until midnight. He hoped that he might catch a glimpse of their camp-fire, but failing in that, being tired and hungry, he laid himself down and tried to sleep; but pondering upon his danger he lay awake until daylight, and had just dropped into a deep slumber when they found him, and he slept so soundly that he failed to hear them call. He said that he saw the Indians on horseback seen by the other men; they passed by him within a hundred yards, but did not see him, as he was already hidden in the willows where he was found.

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[1] This was not Kit Carson. The great frontiersman did not make his advent in the mountains until years afterward.

The lost man being found, the party returned to camp and resumed its journey, exercising renewed caution, as the signs of Indians grew thicker as they moved on. Tracks of the savages' horses and the remains of their camp-fires were now of frequent occurrence, and the game along the trail was easily frightened, another sign of the late presence of Indians.

About noon some mounted Indians were discovered by the aid of the captain's field-glass, on a divide, evidently watching the movements of the party. They were supposed to be runners of some hostile tribe, who intended that night to steal upon them and take their horses, and possibly attempt to take their scalps. Toward night the same Indians were again observed following the trail of the party, and they were now satisfied the savages were dogging them. Having arrived at the margin of a small stream of very pure water, they halted for an hour or more, allowing the Indians, who were evidently watching every movement, to believe their intention was to camp for the night at that spot. As soon as the animals were sufficiently rested, however, and had filled themselves with the nutritious grass growing so luxuriantly all around them, they saddled up, first having added a large amount of fresh fuel to their fires, and started on. They made a detour to the north in order to deceive the savages as much as possible as to their real course. The ruse had the desired effect, for after travelling about ten miles farther, they slept soundly until the next morning, without fires, on a delicious piece of green sod.

At the first streak of dawn the men were in their saddles again, having outwitted the Indians completely. It was about the first of June; and one day, soon after they had gotten rid of their savage spies, one of the party was stricken down with a severe sickness, and they were compelled to lie in camp and attend to the sufferings of their unfortunate comrade. He had a high fever, grew delirious, and as in those days bleeding was considered a panacea for all the ills that flesh is heir to, the captain made several abortive attempts to draw the diseased blood from the poor man, but failed completely. He also dosed his victim with copious draughts of calomel, but the result was far from salutary; the man grew worse, but the party determined to remain with him until he did get better or death relieved him of his sufferings. Accordingly, to make themselves more secure from probable attacks of the Indians, they threw up a rude breastwork of earth, behind which they established themselves and felt thereafter a greater degree of security.

Some of the men were despatched on a hunt for meat, and shortly returned with part of the carcass of a young buffalo cow, and one antelope, which was the first they had been able to kill. The man who killed it said that he resorted to the tactics generally adopted by the Indians. The timid animal would not allow him to approach within rifle-shot, until he had excited its curiosity by fastening a handkerchief on the end of his ramrod. As soon as the antelope saw it, it gradually walked toward him until so near that he was assured that his piece would carry that far. It actually came within thirty yards of him, and he shot it while lying prone on the ground, the graceful animal noticing nothing but the white rag that had attracted its attention.

On the afternoon of that day a band of savages, mounted on fine horses, made their appearance near the camp, and looked upon the white men with great curiosity. It was soon learned that they were Pawnees, and with some little trouble they were enticed to come in, and a talk was had with their leader. They proved to be a party out after some Osages who had stolen a number of horses. They had been lucky enough to overtake them, and had killed nearly all the thieves, regained their horses, and had a number of the enemies' scalps. The Pawnees had met Captain Lewis the year before, and having received some presents from him were inclined to regard the whites as a friendly people. This impression the captain further confirmed by himself making them gifts of some tobacco and trifling trinkets. They were shown around the camp, and seemed to sympathize deeply with the sick man, who was lying on his blankets in a dying condition. They gathered some roots from the prairie, and assured the captain that if the man would take them he would certainly recover; they also urged their manner of sweating and bathing, but the appliances were not at hand, so the advice had to be declined.[1]

That evening the sick man died; an event that was looked for, but not so soon. His body was immediately wrapped in his blanket and deposited in a grave. On the bark of a tree standing near, his name, "William Hamilton," and the date of his death were rudely carved with a jack-knife by one of the party.

Early in the morning the occupants of the camp were shocked at the sight of a pack of wolves most industriously at work on the grave trying to unearth the body of their unfortunate comrade. All the men suddenly and almost simultaneously attempted to fire their rifles at the pack, but were checked by the captain, who urged that the report of their arms might bring down upon them a band of Indians who were not so friendly as the Pawnees. With great difficulty the wolves were driven off, and the grave was covered with heavy logs and the largest stones that could be procured in the vicinity.

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[1] An Indian vapour-bath, or sweating-house, is a square six or eight feet deep, usually built against a river bank, by damming up the other three sides with mud, and covering the top completely, excepting an opening about two feet wide. The bather gets into the hole, taking with him a number of stones that have been heated, and a vessel filled with water. After seating himself he begins to pour the water on the hot stones, until the steam generated is sufficient to answer his purpose. When he has perspired freely, he goes out and plunges in the stream, the colder the water the better.

The party then continued on their journey, feeling very sad over the loss of Hamilton, for he was beloved by all on account of his sterling qualities.

In the afternoon a great commotion was noticed far ahead of them on the prairie. At first they could not determine its cause, but presently the captain, bringing his glass to bear upon the objects, discovered it to be a small band of wolves in full chase after a superannuated buffalo bull, which had been driven out of the herd by the younger ones.

The frightened animal was coming directly toward the party with the excited wolves close at his heels. There were twelve wolves, and evidently they had had a long chase, as both they and the buffalo were nearly exhausted. The party stopped to witness the novel fight, a scene so foreign to anything they had witnessed before. The wolves were close around the buffalo, snapping incessantly at his heels, in their endeavour to hamstring him. They did not hold on like a dog, but at every jump at the poor beast they would bring away a mouthful of his flesh, which they gulped down as they ran. So fierce was the chase that the famishing wolves did not observe the men until they came within ten yards of them; even then they did not appear to be much frightened, but scampered off a short distance, sat on their haunches, licked their bloody chops, and appeared to be waiting with the utmost impatience to renew the chase again. The buffalo had suffered severely, and he was ultimately brought to the ground. The party left him to his fate, and as they rode away they could see the ravenous pack, with fresh impetuosity, tearing the poor beast to pieces with true canine ferocity.

That evening, after the party had fixed their camp for the night, two young Indians, a man and a squaw, rode up and alighted in the midst of the company, apparently worn out from hard riding. Their sudden appearance filled the company with amazement, and the safety of all demanded an immediate explanation, for they all thought that the young savage might be a runner or spy of some hostile band, who were meditating an attack upon them. But they were rather nonplussed upon seeing the youthful maiden; they could not believe that their first conjectures were correct, her presence precluded such a possibility. They had been told by Big White that war-parties never encumbered themselves with women, and the jaded condition of the young people's horses to some extent allayed their fears, for it was evident the Indians had made a long and severe journey.

The captain requested the Indian who had accompanied his party thus far to interrogate them as to what was their destination, and why they had come so unceremoniously into the camp. It was soon learned that the boy was a Pawnee who had been captured by a band of Sioux a year or more ago, and was carried by them to their village far up the Missouri, in which he had remained a prisoner until an opportunity had offered to make his escape. The young girl with him was a Sioux, for whom he had conceived a liking while among her tribe.

Their story, divested of the crude manner in which it was interpreted by the Mandan and put into intelligent

English, was as follows:—The boy belonged to the Pawnee Loups, whose tribe lived on the Wolf Fork of the Platte. One day, in company with several of his young comrades, he had gone down to the river to indulge in the luxury of a swim, and while they were amusing themselves in the water, a raiding band of the Tetons came suddenly upon them, making a prisoner of him while the others managed to make their escape. He was instantly snatched up, tied on a horse, and hurried away. The animal he rode was led by one of the band, and goaded on by another who followed immediately behind. They travelled night and day until they reached a point entirely free from the possibility of being followed, and then he was leisurely conveyed to the main village at the Great Bend of the Missouri. As their prisoner happened to be the son of a grand chief of the Pawnees, he was greatly prized as a captive, and, on that account, was placed in the family of a principal chief of the Tetons. He was only sixteen years old according to his statement, but he was already fully five and a half feet high, and one of the handsomest and best proportioned Indians that Captain Williams had ever seen.

He said that his name was Do-ran-to, and that it is frequently the lot of Indian captives, to some extent, to occupy the relation of servants or slaves to their captors, and to be assigned to those menial and domestic offices which are never performed by men among the Indians, but constitute the employment of the women. To be compelled to fill such a position in the village was very mortifying to the Indian pride of Do-ran-to, the heir to a chieftainship in his own tribe; but he became somewhat reconciled to it, as it threw him in the company of a beautiful daughter of the principal man in the village, whose name was Ni-ar-gua.

Do-ran-to was never permitted to go to war or to hunt the buffalo, a mode of life too tame and inactive for one of his restless spirit; but the compensation was in the frequent opportunities it gave him of walking and talking with the beautiful Ni-ar-gua, over whose heart he had soon gained a complete victory.

It would not do, however, for the daughter of a distinguished chief to be the wife of a captive slave, belonging, too, to a tribe toward which the Tetons entertained a hereditary hostility. It would be a flagrant violation of every rule of Indian etiquette. The mother of the youthful Ni-ar-gua, like her white match-making sisters, soon noticed the growing familiarity of the two lovers, and she like a good wife reported the matter to her husband, the chief. The intelligence was entirely unexpected, and by no means very agreeable to his feeling of pride, so, after the savage method of disciplining refractory daughters, Ni-ar-gua was not only roughly reproved for her temerity, but received a good lodge-poling from her irate father, besides. He also threatened to shoot an arrow through the heart of Do-ran-to for his impudent pretensions. The result, however, of the attempt to break the match, as in similar cases in civilized life, was not only unsuccessful, but served to increase the flame it was intended to extinguish, and to strengthen instead of dissolve the attachment between the two.

If now their partiality for each other was not visible and open, they were none the less determined to carry out their designs. When the young Pawnee perceived that there were difficulties in the way, which would ever be insuperable while he remained a prisoner among the Tetons, he immediately conceived the idea of eloping to his own people, and embraced the first opportunity to apprise Ni-ar-gua of his design. The proposition met with a hearty response on her part. She was ready to go with him wherever he went, and to die where he died.

Now there was a young warrior of her own tribe who also desired the hand of the Teton belle, and he greatly envied the position Do-ran-to occupied in the eyes of Ni-ar-gua. In fact, he entertained the most deadly hate toward the Pawnee captive, and suffered no opportunity to show it to pass unimproved. Do-ran-to was by no means ignorant of the young warrior's feelings of jealousy and hate, but he felt his disability as an alien in the tribe, and pursued a course of forbearance as most likely to ensure the accomplishment of his designs. Still, there were bounds beyond which his code of honour would not suffer his enemy to pass. On one occasion, the young brave offered Do-ran-to the greatest and most intolerable insult which in the estimation of Western tribes one man can give to another.

The person on whom this indignity is cast, by a law among the tribes, may take away the life of the offender if he can; but it is customary, and thought more honourable, to settle the difficulty by single combat, in which the parties may use the kind of weapons on which they mutually agree. Public sentiment will admit of no compromise. If no resistance is offered to the insult, the person insulted is thenceforth a disgraced wretch, a dog, and universally despised. Do-ran-to forthwith demanded satisfaction of the young Sioux, who, by the way, was only too anxious to give it, being full of game and mettle, as well as sanguine as to the victory he would gain over the hated young Pawnee. They agreed to settle their difficulty by single combat, and the weapons to be used were war-clubs and short knives. A suitable place was selected. The whole village of the Tetons emptied itself to witness the combat. Men, women, and children swarmed about the arena. The two youthful combatants made their appearance, stark naked, and took their positions about thirty yards apart. Just when the signal was given, Do-ran-to's eye caught that of his betrothed Ni-ar-gua in the crowd. Then said his heart, "Be strong and my arm big!" There was no fear then in Do-ran-to.

As the champions advanced toward each other, the Sioux was too precipitate, and by the impulse of the charge was carried rather beyond Do-ran-to, who, being more cool and deliberate, gave him, as he passed, a blow on the back of the neck with his war-club that perfectly stunned him and brought him to the ground. Do-ran-to then sprang upon him and despatched him by a single thrust of his knife. The relatives of the unfortunate Sioux raised a loud lament, and, with that piteous kind of howling peculiar to savages, bore him away. Do-ran-to was now regarded as a young brave, and was greatly advanced in the general esteem of the village. He must now be an adopted son, and no longer a woman, but go to war, and hunt the buffalo, the elk, and the antelope.

The father of Ni-ar-gua, however, must in this matter be excepted. In the general excitement in behalf of the lucky captive he lagged behind, and was reserved and sullen. Having conceived a dislike for him, he was not inclined to confer upon him the honours he had so fairly won. And then it would not do to appear delighted with the valour of the young Pawnee. Ni-ar-gua was his favourite child, and she must be the wife of some distinguished personage. But the chief was doomed, as many a father is, to be outwitted by his daughter in matters of this kind. At a time when he was absent, holding a council with a neighbouring tribe of the Sioux upon great national affairs, Do-ran-to picked out two of the chief's best horses on which to escape with the girl to his own tribe. Ni-ar-gua was ready. When the village was sunk in a profound sleep, she met him in a sequestered spot, bringing a supply of provisions for their intended trip. In a moment they were in their saddles and away!

They were not less than three "sleeps" from his own people, and would be followed by some of the Tetons as long as there was any hope of overtaking them. By morning, however, there would be such a wide space between them and their pursuers as to make their escape entirely practicable, if no mishap befell them on the way. They had good horses, good hearts, a good country to travel over, and above all a good cause, and why not good luck?

They travelled night and day, never stopping any longer than was absolutely necessary to rest their horses. After his story was told, the captain tried to prevail upon the young couple to remain with the company until morning, and enjoy that rest and refreshment which he and the girl so much needed; but the gallant young savage said that they had not slept since they had set out on their flight, nor did they even dare to think of closing their eyes before they should reach the village of the Pawnees. He knew that he would be pursued as long as there was any hope of overtaking him; and he also knew what his doom would be if he again fell into the hands of the Sioux. Having remained, therefore, in the camp scarcely an hour, the two fugitive lovers were again on the wing, flying over the green prairie, guided by the light of a full and beautiful moon, and animated and sustained by the purity of their motives and the hope of soon reaching a place of safety and protection.

Captain Williams' party could not but admire the courage of the Teton beauty, the cheerfulness, and even hilarity that she manifested while in their camp. When ready to start off, she leaped from the ground, unassisted, into her Indian saddle, reined up her horse, and was instantly beside him with whom she was now ready to share any trial and brave any danger. It was an exhibition of female fortitude, that kind of heroism, peculiar to the sex in all races, which elevates woman to a summit perfectly inaccessible to man.

The party moved on the next day, and the utmost caution was necessary to prevent it from being cut off, for the region through which they were now passing was infested with many bands of Sioux, — a terror to all other tribes on account of their superior numbers. The several bands were scattered from the waters of the Platte to the Black Hills, and for a number of years resisted all efforts made by various expeditions to push forward to the upper tribes.

One day, after leaving their camp where the Indian lovers had come so suddenly upon them, a large herd of buffaloes was observed feeding very quietly about a quarter of a mile from their line of travel, offering those an opportunity who desired to show their horsemanship and skill in a hunt. Although they had an abundance of meat, and it was the purpose of the captain that there should be no more shooting than was absolutely necessary, the impetuous Carson asked permission to try his hand.

The captain reluctantly granted his request, as it was nearly sundown, and the company had come to its accustomed halt. The more experienced of the men urged Carson not to venture too near the object of his pursuit, nor too far from the camp, as both steps might be accompanied with danger to all. The young man felt it to be the safer plan to undertake the hunt on horseback, and as the heavy rifles of those days were not so easily handled as the modern arm, he armed himself with two braces of pistols. The buffalo very soon observed his approach, became frightened, and incontinently put off at full speed. This made it necessary that the hunter should increase his speed, and immediately horse, hunter, and buffalo were out of sight of the camp.

Having completed their evening meal and grazed their animals, the party would have moved on, but Carson had not yet returned. Night came on rapidly and still he did not make his appearance. Many fears for his safety were now entertained in the camp, and the suspicious circumstance of his prolonged absence generally prevented the men from sleeping at all that night. Early in the morning a party went out to hunt him, and without much difficulty found him. He was sitting on a large rock near the stream, perfectly lost. Some of the men while looking for him had discovered him when about a mile away, and naturally supposed he was an Indian, as they could see no horse, and were very near leaving him to his fate; but the thought that they might be mistaken prompted them to approach, and they recognized him. According to his story he chased the buffalo for five or six miles, and for some time could not induce his horse to go near enough to the animals for him to use his pistols with any effect. After repeated unsuccessful attempts, however, he was enabled to ride up to the side of an immense bull, and commenced to fire at him as he ran. His repeated shots threw the animal into the greatest rage, and as horse, bull, and rider were dashing down the slope of the hill, the infuriated bull suddenly stopped short, turned round, and began to battle. The horse, not trained to such dangerous tactics, following immediately behind the bull, became at the moment perfectly unmanageable, rushed upon the horns of the buffalo, and his rider was thrown headlong to the ground. When he had recovered himself, and got on his feet again, he saw the buffalo running off as fast as his legs could carry him, but found that his horse was so badly wounded as to be of no further use to him. When he gathered his senses, he would have gladly gone back to the camp, but in the excitement of the chase he had paid no attention to the direction he was going, and was absolutely lost. He wandered about, and at last coming to a willow copse crawled in and slept until morning. At the first streak of dawn he crawled out of his hiding-place, and very cautiously examined the prairie all around him to learn whether any Indians had been prowling about. Observing nothing that indicated any danger, he set out with the intention of finding the party, and had tramped around until hunger and fatigue had compelled him to sit down where they had found him. As the party returned to camp they discovered Carson's horse; he was dead, and a pack of hungry wolves had already nearly devoured him. In fact it was the general idea that the horse had been killed by the wolves, as the whole country was infested by them, and, scenting the blood of the wounded animal, soon put an end to his misery. They had commenced upon the saddle, and had so torn and chewed it that it was perfectly useless.

Upon his arrival in camp the crestfallen Carson was asked a hundred questions, but he did not feel like being taunted, as he had gone without a morsel to eat for fifteen hours, had undergone great fatigue, and was considerably bruised from his tumble off his horse.

Several nights after Carson's escapade, about an hour after dark the party saw before them a light which they thought might indicate the proximity of an Indian camp. As some of the men who had been out to reconnoitre approached it, they discovered they were not mistaken in their surmises, and upon their return to camp and reporting what they had seen, the captain thought it a wise plan to move out as quickly as possible. The Indians whom they had seen numbered about a hundred, and they were seated around about fifteen fires; some of them were women and they appeared to be very busy drying meat; the party had evidently been out on a hunt. A large number of horses were grazing in the vicinity of the camp, and the majority of the warriors were smoking their pipes, while their squaws were hard at work.

Captain Williams pushed ahead all that night and the greater portion of the next day before he dared to go into camp. They continued on for several days more, then made a temporary camp for the purpose of trapping for beaver. In a short time the men and horses recovered from the effects of their toilsome journey. The latter began to get fat, their feet and backs, which had become sore, were healing up rapidly, and they were soon in as fine a condition as when they left St. Louis. The men were having a good time, securing plenty of beaver, and the camp resounded with laughter at the jokes which were passed around.

For several weeks they had seen no signs of Indians, but one morning one of the men discovered that an Indian had been caught in a trap, from which, however, he had extricated himself, as it was found near the spot where it had been set. A day or two afterward, ten of the party left the camp on a buffalo-hunt. At the beginning of the chase the buffalo were not more than a mile from the camp, but they were pursued for more than three or four miles, which led the party into danger. A band of Blackfeet, numbering at least a hundred, suddenly appeared over a divide, and, splendidly mounted on trained ponies, came toward the hunters as fast as their animals could carry them. Five of Captain Williams' men made their escape, and reached the camp, but the remainder were cut off, and immediately killed and scalped. The five who made their escape were chased to within a half-mile of the camp by several of the savages, one of whom, after his comrades had wheeled their horses on seeing the men ready for them, persistently kept on, evidently eager to get another scalp. He paid for his rashness with his life, as one of the hunters who had not yet discharged his rifle sent a bullet after him, which shot him through and through, and he tumbled from his animal stone dead.

The loss of five men from a party which originally numbered only twenty had a very depressing effect upon those who were left, and Captain Williams felt that his situation was very critical. He expected every moment to see a large band of the Blackfeet come down upon him. He was now certain of one thing; he knew that his party had been watched by the savages for several days, as they had noticed several times, during the past week, objects which they believed to have been wolves, moving on the summits of the divides, but after their unfortunate skirmish with the Indians they felt sure that what they had taken to be wolves were in fact savages.

The fight with its disastrous results had occurred late in the afternoon, so that it was not long before the party made their first camp for the night. The horses were all brought in and picketed near, the traps gathered as fast as possible, and everything made ready for a hasty departure as soon as darkness should close in upon them. Large fires were lighted as usual, only more than the usual number were kindled, and at midnight the sorrowful party mounted their animals and set off.

They travelled as fast as their horses could walk for fully twenty-four hours before they dared make another halt, but they soon found themselves in the country of the Crows, who were friendly with the whites. The first village they encountered was a very large one, and the chief induced them to remain with him for nearly a week, during which time they went out on a buffalo-hunt with their newly found friends. They were not satisfied, however, with the region, it being not nearly so fruitful in beaver as the country south of the Crows, so they made a detour to the south.

When about to leave the generous Crows, one of Captain Williams' men, whose name was Rose, expressed his intention to abandon the party and take up his life with the Indians. It appears that while Rose was in the village he was not able to resist the charms of a certain Crow maiden, whom he afterward chose as his wife, with whom he lived happily for several years. When Rose joined Captain Williams' party, his antecedents were entirely unknown to that grand old frontiersman. It turned out that he was one of those desperadoes of the then remote frontier, who had been outlawed for his crimes farther east, and whose character was worse than any savage, with whom even now such men sometimes consort. Rose had formerly belonged to a gang of pirates who infested the islands of the Mississippi, plundering boats as they travelled up and down the river. They sometimes shifted the scene of their robberies to the shore, waylaid voyagers on their route to New Orleans, and often perpetrated the most cold-blooded murders. When the villanous horde of cut-throats was broken up, Rose betook himself to the upper wilderness, and when Captain Williams was forming his company at St. Louis, he came forward and offered himself. Captain Williams was not at all pleased with the sinister looks of the fellow, suspecting that his character was not good, but it was a difficult matter to induce men to join an expedition fraught with so much daring and danger. So the refugee was dropped among the Crows, whose habits of life were much more congenial to the feelings of such a man than the restraints of civilization.[1]

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[1] Rose lived with the Crows many years, became a great man among them, could speak their language fluently. He was a giant, and fearless to recklessness, and by his deeds of daring became one of the first braves of the tribe. At one time, in a desperate fight with the Blackfeet, he shot down the first savage who opposed him, and with the war-club of his victim killed four others. His name among the Crows was "Che-ku-kaats," or the man who killed five. His knowledge of the country was marvellous, and some years after his adoption by the tribe, he was

The Crow chief at the time of the visit of Captain Williams' party to their nation was Ara-poo-ish, who was succeeded by the famous Jim Beckwourth, who remained at the head of the tribe for many years.

When Captain Williams arrived at the headwaters of the Platte, the party met with another disaster. Early one morning seven of the men, including the captain, went out to bring in their horses which had been turned out to graze the evening before. As they were still in the country of the Crows, whom they regarded as their firm friends, they had not exercised their usual precaution of securely picketing their animals. They merely had tied their two forefeet loosely together to prevent them from straying too far, while they retired to the shelter of some friendly timber a short distance away, and lying down on their buffalo-robes, went to sleep. When they set out for their animals they could not be found. A trail, however, plainly discernible in the deep, dewy grass, was soon discovered, very fresh, leading across a low divide. They also came upon several of the rawhide strips by which their horses had been hobbled. These were not broken, but had evidently been unfastened, a circumstance that filled the minds of the party with the most painful anxiety. They continued on the trail of the missing animals, to the top of a ridge, where they were suddenly confronted by a band of about sixty Indians. The savages appeared to be busy preparing an attack upon the party, for when the Indians observed the white men they immediately mounted their ponies, and dashed right down the hill tow-

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the principal guide and interpreter for Fitzpatrick and Sublette, who conducted a trapping expedition sent across the continent by General Ashley. How he died is unknown; one rumour says from his licentious habits, another that he was killed by some of his adopted brethren. He was a heroic vagabond, but the redeeming feature of his life was that he taught the Crows to cultivate the friendship of the whites, a policy which that tribe observed for years.

ard them, at the same moment making the hills echo with their diabolical whoops. Captain Williams urged his men to make their escape to the timber, but before they could reach it five of them were overtaken, killed, and scalped! The captain and one other man succeeded in reaching the clump of trees, though very closely pursued. The remaining men who were left in camp, seeing the savages coming, snatched up their rifles, and each hiding himself behind the trunk of a tree opened fire upon them. That movement caused the savages to wheel around and dash back, but they left several of their comrades dead and wounded upon the ground. In a few moments the infuriated Indians made another charge, shouting and whooping as only savages can, and launched a shower of arrows into the timber. The underbrush was very dense, which prevented them from riding into the timber, and also from seeing the exact whereabouts of Captain Williams and his men. It was a most fortunate circumstance, for they would have been cut off if they had been out on the open prairie, but as they could plainly see the savages, they took careful aim, and at each report of the rifle a savage was brought to the ground. The Indians made four successive charges, and discovering they were not able to dislodge the little band of brave white men, they finally abandoned the fight and rode away. Nineteen of the Indians were killed by Captain Williams' party, but it was a sad victory, for now only ten men were left of the original twenty, and they were without a single horse to ride or pack their equipage upon.

Certainly expecting that the savages would shortly return with reënforcements, the sad little company hurriedly gathered up their furs and as many traps as the ten men could carry, and travelled about ten miles, keeping close to the timber. When darkness came on they crept into a very dense growth of underbrush, where they passed the greater part of the night in erecting a scaffold upon which they cached their furs, traps, and other things which they found inconvenient to carry.

As the prospects of the company were now gloomy in the extreme, the spirits of the men drooped and their hearts became sad. They were many hundreds of miles from any settlement, in the heart of a wilderness almost boundless, and beset on every side by lurking savages ready at any moment to dash in upon them when an opportunity offered.

Of course, the project of crossing the Rocky Mountains and trapping at the headwaters of the Columbia had now to be abandoned. They wandered about, meeting with various adventures, until only Captain Williams and two others of the party were left. At last they agreed to separate, the two intending to attempt the difficult passage back to St. Louis, while the brave captain remained, and finally reached the great Arkansas Valley in safety.

Drying Meat

CHAPTER III

GENERAL W. H. ASHLEY'S TRAPPING EXPEDITION — JIM BECKWOURTH'S STORY — TWO AXE — KILL FOURTEEN HUNDRED BUFFALOES — THE SURROUND — EXPEDITION IS DIVIDED — BOATS ARE BUILT — GREEN RIVER SUCK — INDIANS MURDER LE BRACHE — BECKWOURTH MEETS CASTENGA

IN 1812 General William H. Ashley, the head of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, travelled up the Platte Valley, which a few years previously had been traversed by Captain Ezekiel Williams, whose routes were nearly the same. This party had a particularly hard time. Before they reached the buffalo country the Indians had driven every herd away.

In the company there were two Spaniards, who were one morning left behind at camp to catch some horses that had strayed. The two men stopped at the house of a respectable white woman, and finding her without protection, they assaulted her. They were pursued to the camp by a number of the settlers, who made the outrage known to the trappers. They all regarded the crime with the utmost abhorrence, and felt mortified that any of their party should be guilty of conduct so revolting. The culprits were arrested, and they at once admitted their guilt. A council was called in the presence of the settlers, and the men were offered their choice of two punishments: either to be hanged to the nearest tree, or to receive one hundred lashes each on the bare back. They chose the latter, which was immediately inflicted upon them by four of the trappers. Having no cat-o'-nine-tails in their possession, the lashes were inflicted with hickory withes. Their backs were terribly lacerated, and the blood flowed in streams to the ground. The following morning the two Spaniards and two of the best horses were missing from the camp; they were not pursued, however, but by the tracks it was discovered they had started for New Mexico.

There were thirty-four men in the party, including the general, and a harder-looking set for want of nourishment could hardly be imagined. They moved forward hoping to find game, as their allowance was half a pint of flour a day per man. This was made into a kind of gruel. If it happened that a duck or goose was killed, it was shared as fairly as possible.

There were no jokes, no fireside stories, no fun; each man rose in the morning with the gloom of the preceding night filling his mind; they built their fires without saying a word, and partook of their scanty repast in silence.

At last an order was given for the hunters to sally out and try their fortunes. Jim Beckwourth, who was one of the party, a mere youth then, tells of the success in the following words: —

"I seized my rifle and issued from camp alone, feeling so reduced in strength that my mind involuntarily reverted to the extremity I had been brought to by my youthful folly in coming into such a desert waste. About three hundred yards from the camp I saw two teal ducks; I levelled my rifle, and handsomely decapitated one. This was a temptation to my constancy; appetite and conscientiousness had a long strife as to the disposal of the booty. I reflected that it would be but an inconsiderable trifle to the mess of four hungry men, while to roast and eat him myself would give me strength to hunt for more. A strong inward feeling remonstrated against such an invasion of the rights of my starving messmates; but if, by fortifying myself, I gained ability to procure something more substantial than a teal duck, my dereliction would be sufficiently atoned for, and my overruling appetite at the same time gratified.

"Had I admitted my messmates to the argument, they might possibly have carried it adversely. But I received the conclusion as valid; so, roasting it without ceremony in the bushes, I devoured the duck alone, and felt greatly invigorated by the meal.

"Passing up the stream, I pushed forward to fulfil my obligation. At the distance of about a mile from the camp, I came across a narrow deer-trail through some bushes, and directly across the trail, with only the centre of his body visible (his two extremities being hidden by the rushes), not more than fifty yards distant, I saw a fine large buck standing. I did not wait for a nearer shot. I fired, and broke his neck. I despatched him by drawing my knife across his throat, and, having partially dressed him, hung him on a tree close by. Proceeding onward, I met a large wolf, attracted, probably, by the scent of the deer. I shot him, and, depriving him of his meal, devoted him for a repast to the camp. Before I returned, I succeeded in killing three good-sized elk, which, added to the former, afforded a pretty good display of meat.

"I then returned near enough to the camp to signal them to come to my assistance. They had heard the reports of my rifle, and, knowing that I would not waste ammunition, had been expecting to see me return with game. All who were able turned out at my summons, and, when they saw the booty awaiting them, their faces were irradiated with joy.

"Each man shouldered his load, but there was not one capable of carrying the weight of forty pounds. The game being all brought into camp, the fame of Jim Beckwourth was celebrated by all tongues. Amid all this gratulation, I could not separate my thoughts from the duck which had supplied my clandestine meal in the bushes. I suffered them to appease their hunger before I ventured to tell my comrades of the offence of which I had been guilty. All justified my conduct, declaring my conclusions obvious. As it turned out, my proceeding was right enough; but if I had failed to meet with any game, I had been guilty of an offence which would have haunted me ever after.

"The following day we started up the river, and, after progressing some four or five miles, came in sight of plenty of deer sign. The general ordered a halt, and directed all hunters out as before. We sallied out in different directions, our general, who was a good hunter, being one of the number. At a short distance from the camp I discovered a large buck passing slowly between myself and the camp, at about pistol-shot distance. As I happened to be standing against a tree, he had not seen me. I fired, the ball passed through his body, and whizzed past the camp. Leaving him, I encountered a second deer within three-quarters of a mile. I shot him and hung him on a limb. Encouraged with my success, I climbed a tree to get a fairer view of the ground. Looking around from my elevated position, I perceived some large dark-coloured animal grazing on the side of a hill, about a mile and a half distant. I was determined to have a shot at him, whatever he might be. I knew meat was in demand, and that fellow, well-stored, was worth a thousand teal ducks.

"I therefore approached with the greatest precaution to within fair rifle-shot distance, scrutinizing him very closely, and still unable to make out what he was. I could see no horns; if it was a bear, I thought him an enormous one. I took sight at him over my faithful rifle, which had never failed me, and then set it down, to contemplate the huge animal still further. Finally I resolved to let fly. Taking good aim, I pulled the trigger, the rifle cracked, and then I made rapid retreat toward the camp. After running about two hundred yards, and hearing nothing of a movement behind me, I ventured to look around, and to my great joy I saw the animal had fallen.

"Continuing my course to camp, I encountered the general, who, perceiving blood on my hands, addressed me: 'Have you shot anything, Jim?'

"I replied, 'Yes, sir.'

"'What have you shot?'

"'Two deer and something else,' I answered.

"'And what is something else?' he inquired.

"'I do not know, sir.'

"'What did he look like?' the general interrogated. 'Had he horns?'

"'I saw no horns, sir.'

"'What colour was the animal?

"'You can see him, General,' I replied, 'by climbing yonder tree.'

"The general ascended the tree accordingly, and, looking through his spy-glass, which he always carried, exclaimed, 'A buffalo, by heavens!' and coming nimbly down the tree, he gave orders for us to take a couple of horses, and go and dress the buffalo, and bring him to camp.

"I suggested that two horses would not carry the load; six were therefore despatched for the purpose, and they all came back well packed with the remains.

"That was the first buffalo I had ever seen though I had travelled hundreds of miles in the buffalo country. The conviction weighing upon my mind that it was a huge bear I was approaching had so excited me that, although within fair gun-shot, I actually could not see his horns. The general and my companions had many a hearty laugh at my expense, he often expressing wonder that my keen eye could not, when close to the animal, perceive the horns, while he could see them plainly nearly two miles away.

"When we moved up the river again, we hoped to fall in with game, though unfortunately found but little in our course. When we had advanced some twenty miles we halted. Our position looked threatening. It was midwinter, and everything around us bore a gloomy aspect. We were without any provisions, and we saw no means of obtaining any. At this crisis, six or seven Indians of the Pawnee Loup band came into our camp. Knowing them to be friendly, we were overjoyed to see them. They informed our interpreter that their village was only four miles distant, which at once accounted for the absence of game. They invited us to their lodges, where they could supply us with everything we needed, but on representing to them our scarcity of horses, and the quantity of peltry we had no means of packing, they immediately started off to their village. Our interpreter accompanied them, in quest of horses, and speedily returned with a sufficient number. Packing our effects, we accompanied them to the village, Two Axe and a Spaniard named Antoine Behele, chief of the band, forming part of our escort.

"Arrived at their village, we replaced our lost horses by purchasing others in their stead, and now everything being ready for our departure, our general informed Two Axe of his wish to get on.

"Two Axe objected: 'My men are about to surround the buffalo,' he said; 'if you go now, you will frighten them. You must stay four days more, then you may go.' His word was law, so we stayed accordingly.

"Within the four days appointed they made the 'surround,' and killed fourteen hundred buffaloes. The tongues were counted by General Ashley himself, and thus I can guarantee the assertion.

"There were engaged in this hunt from one to two thousand Indians, some mounted and others on foot. They encompassed a large space where the buffalo were contained, and, closing in around them on all sides, formed a complete circle. The circle at first enclosed measured say six miles in diameter, with an irregular circumference determined by the movements of the herd. When the 'surround' was formed, the hunters radiated from the main body to the right and left, and the ring was entire. The chief then gave the order to charge, which was communicated along the ring with lightning-like speed; every man then rushed to the centre, and the work of destruction began. The unhappy victims, finding themselves hemmed in on every side, ran this way and that in their mad efforts to escape. Finding all chance of escape impossible, and seeing their slaughtered fellows drop dead at their feet, they bellowed with fright, and in the confusion that whelmed them lost all power of resistance. The slaughter generally lasted two or three hours, and seldom many got clear of the weapons of their assailants.

"The field over the 'surround' presented the appearance of one vast slaughter-house. He who had been the most successful in the work of devastation was celebrated as a hero, and received the highest honours from the fair sex, while he who had been so unfortunate as not to have killed a single buffalo was jeered at and ridiculed by the whole band.

"The 'surround' accomplished, we received permission from Two Axe to take up our line of march. Accordingly we started along the river, and had only proceeded five miles from the village when we found that the Platte forked. Taking the South Fork, we journeyed on some six miles and camped. So we continued every day, making slow progress, some days not advancing more than four or five miles, until we had left the Pawnee villages three hundred miles in our rear. We found plenty of buffalo along our route until we approached the Rocky Mountains, when the buffalo, as well as all other game, became scarce, and we had to resort to the beans and corn supplied to us by the Pawnees.

"Not finding any game for a number of days, we again felt alarmed for our safety. The snow was deep on the ground, and our poor horses could obtain no food but the boughs and bark of the cottonwood trees. Still we pushed forward, seeking to advance as far as possible, in order to open a trade with the Indians, and occupy ourselves in trapping during the finish of the season. We were again put upon reduced rations, one pint of beans per day being the allowance to a mess of four men, with other articles in proportion.

"We travelled on till we arrived at Pilot Butte, where two misfortunes befell us. A great portion of our horses were stolen by the Crow Indians, and General Ashley was taken sick, caused, beyond doubt, by exposure and insufficient fare. Our condition was growing worse and worse; and, as a measure best calculated to procure relief, we all resolved to go on a general hunt, and bring home something to supply our pressing necessities. All who were able, therefore, started in different directions, our customary mode of hunting. I travelled, as near as I could judge, about ten miles from the camp, and saw no signs of game. I reached a high point of land, and, on taking a general survey, I discovered a river which I had never seen in this region before. It was of considerable size, flowing four or five miles distant, and on its banks I observed acres of land covered with moving masses of buffalo. I hailed this as a perfect godsend, and was overjoyed with the feeling of security infused by my opportune discovery. However, fatigued and weak, I accelerated my return to the camp, and communicated my success to my companions. Their faces brightened up at the intelligence, and all were impatient to be at them.

"The general, on learning my intelligence, desired us to move forward to the river with what horses we had left, and each man to carry on his back a pack of the goods that remained after loading the cattle. He farther desired us to roll up snow to provide him with a shelter, and to return the next day to see if he survived. The men, in their eagerness to get to the river (which is now called Green River), loaded themselves so heavily that three or four were left with nothing but their rifles to carry.

"We all feasted ourselves to our hearts' content upon the delicious, coarse-grained flesh of the buffalo, of which there was an unlimited supply. There were, besides, plenty of wild geese and teal ducks on the river — the latter, however, I very seldom ventured to kill. One day several of us were out hunting buffalo, the general, who, by the way, was a very good shot, being among the number. The snow had blown from the level prairie, and the wind had drifted it in deep masses over the margins of the small hills, through which the buffalo had made trails just wide enough to admit one at a time. These snow-trails had become quite deep, — like all snow-trails in the spring of the year, — thus affording us a fine opportunity for lurking in one trail, and shooting a buffalo in another. The general had wounded a bull, which, smarting with pain, made a furious plunge at his assailant, burying him in the snow with a thrust from his savage-looking head and horns. I, seeing the danger in which he was placed, sent a ball into the beast just behind the shoulder, instantly dropping him dead. The general was rescued from almost certain death, having received only a few scratches in the adventure.

"After remaining in camp four or five days, the general resolved upon dividing our party into detachments of four or five men each, and sending them upon different routes, in order the better to accomplish the object of our perilous journey, which was the collecting of all the beaver-skins possible while the fur was yet valuable. Accordingly we constructed several boats of buffalo-hides for the purpose of descending the river and proceeding along any of its tributaries that might lie in our way.

"One of our boats being finished and launched, the general sprang into it to test its capacity. The boat was made fast by a slender string, which snapping with a sudden jerk, the boat was drawn into the current and drifted away, general and all, in the direction of the opposite shore.

"It will be necessary, before I proceed further, to give the reader a description, in as concise a manner as possible, of this 'Green River Suck.'

"We were camped, as we had discovered during our frequent excursions, at the head of a great fall of Green River, where it passes through the Utah Mountains. The current, at a small distance from our camp, became exceedingly rapid, and drew toward the centre from each shore. This place we named the Suck. This fall continued for six or eight miles, making a sheer descent, in the entire distance, of over two hundred and fifty feet. The river was filled with rocks and ledges, and frequent sharp curves, having high mountains and perpendicular cliffs on either side. Below our camp, the river passed through a cañon, which continued below the fall to a distance of twenty-five or thirty miles. Wherever there was an eddy or a growth of willows, there was sure to be found a beaver lodge; the cunning creatures having selected that secluded, and, as they doubtless considered, inaccessible spot, to conceal themselves from the watchful eye of the trapper.

"After caching our peltry and goods by burying them in safe places, we received instructions from our general to rendezvous at the 'Suck' by the first of July following. Bidding each other adieu, for we could hardly expect we should meet again, we took up our different lines of march.

"Our party was led by one Clements, and consisted of six, among whom was the boy Baptiste; he always insisted on remaining with his brother (as he called me). Our route was up the river — a country that none of us had ever seen before — where the foot of the white man has seldom, if ever, left its print. We were very successful in finding beaver as we progressed, and we obtained plenty of game for the wants of our small party. Wherever we hauled up a trap, we usually found a beaver, besides a considerable number we killed with the rifle.

"In moving up the river we came to a small stream — one of the tributaries of Green River — which we named Horse Creek, in honour of a wild horse we found on its banks. The creek abounded with the objects of our search, and in a very few days we succeeded in taking over one hundred beavers, the skins of which were worth ten dollars per pound in St. Louis. Sixty skins, when dried, formed a pack of one hundred pounds. After having finished our work on Horse Creek, we returned to the main river, and proceeded on, meeting with very good success, until we encountered another branch, which we subsequently named Le Brache Creek, from our comrade who was murdered by the Indians. Our success was much greater here than at any point since leaving the Suck, and we followed it up until we came to a deep cañon, in which we camped.

"The next day, while the men were variously engaged about the camp, happening to be in a more elevated position than the others, I saw a party of Indians approaching within a few yards, evidently unaware of our being in their neighbourhood. I immediately shouted, 'Indians! Indians! to your guns, men!' and levelled my rifle at the foremost of them. They held up their hands, saying, 'Bueno! bueno!' meaning that they were good or friendly; at which my companions cried out to me, 'Don't fire! don't fire! they are friendly—they speak Spanish.' But we were sorry afterward we did not all shoot. Our horses had taken fright at the confusion and ran up the cañon. Baptiste and myself went in pursuit of them. When we came back with them we found sixteen Indians sitting around our camp smoking, and jabbering their own tongue, which none of us could understand. They passed the night and next day with us in apparent friendship. Thinking this conduct assumed, from the fact that they rather overdid the thing, we deemed it prudent to retrace our steps to the open prairie, where, if they did intend to commence an attack upon us, we should have a fairer chance of defending ourselves. Accordingly we packed up and left, all the Indians following us.

"The next day they continued to linger about the camp. We had but slight suspicion of their motives, although, for security, we kept constant guard upon them. From this they proceeded to certain liberties (which I here strictly caution all emigrants and mountaineers against ever permitting), such as handling our guns, except the arms of the guard, piling them, and then carrying them together. At length one of the Indians shouldered all the guns, and, starting off with them ran fifty yards from camp. Mentioning to my mates I did not like the manœuvres of these fellows, I started after the Indian and took my gun from him, Baptiste doing the same, and we brought them back to camp. Our companions chided us for doing so, saying we should anger the Indians by doubting their friendship. I said I considered my gun as safe in my own hands as in the hands of a strange savage; if they chose to give up theirs, they were at liberty to do so.

"When night came on, we all lay down except poor Le Brache, who kept guard, having an Indian with him to replenish the fire. Some of the men had fallen asleep, lying near by, when we were all suddenly startled by a loud cry from Le Brache and the instant report of a gun, the contents of which passed between Baptiste and myself, who both occupied one bed, the powder burning a hole in our upper blankets. We were all up in an instant. An Indian had seized my rifle, but I instantly wrenched it from him, though I acknowledge I was too terrified to shoot. When we had in some measure recovered from our sudden fright, I hastened to Le Brache, and discovered that a tomahawk had been sunk in his head, and there remained. I pulled it out, and in examining the ghastly wound, buried all four fingers of my right hand in his brain. We bound up his head, but he was a corpse in a few moments.

"Not an Indian was then to be seen, but we well knew they were in the bushes close by, and that, in all probability, we should every one share the fate of our murdered comrade. What to do now was the universal inquiry. With the butt of my rifle I scattered the fire, to prevent the Indians making a sure mark of us. We then proceeded to pack up with the utmost despatch, intending to move into the open prairie, where, if they attacked us again, we could at least defend ourselves, notwithstanding our disparity of numbers, we being but five to sixteen.

"On searching for Le Brache's gun, it was nowhere to be found, the Indian who had killed him having doubtless carried it off. While hastily packing our articles, I very luckily found five quivers well stocked with arrows, the bows attached, together with two Indian guns. These well supplied our missing rifle, for I had practised so much with bow and arrow that I was considered a good shot.

"When in readiness to leave, our leader inquired in which direction the river lay; his agitation had been so great that his memory had failed him. I directed the way, and desired every man to put the animals upon their utmost speed until we were safely out of the willows, which order was complied with. While thus running the gauntlet, the balls and arrows whizzed around us as fast as our hidden enemies could send them. Not a man was scratched, however, though two of our horses were wounded, my horse having received an arrow in the neck, and another being wounded near the hip, both slightly. Pursuing our course we arrived soon in the open ground, where we considered ourselves comparatively safe.

"Arriving at a small rise in the prairie, I suggested to our leader that this would be a good place to make a stand, for if the Indians followed us we had the advantage in position.

"'No,' said he, 'we will proceed on to New Mexico.'

"I was astonished at his answer, well knowing — though but slightly skilled in geography — that New

Mexico must be many hundreds of miles farther south. However, I was not captain and we proceeded. Keeping the return track, we found ourselves, in the afternoon of the following day, about sixty miles from the scene of the murder.

"The assault had been made, as we afterward learned, by three young Indians, who were ambitious to distinguish themselves in the minds of their tribe by the massacre of an American party.

Bluffs of Green River

"We were still descending the banks of the Green River, which is the main branch of the Colorado, when, about the time mentioned above, I discovered horses in the skirt of the woods on the opposite side. My companions pronounced them buffalo, but I was confident they were horses, because I could distinguish white ones among them. Proceeding still farther, I discovered men with the horses, my comrades still confident I was in error. Speedily, however, they all became satisfied of my correctness, and we formed the conclusion that we had come across a party of Indians. We saw by their manœuvres that they had discovered us, for they were then collecting all their property together.

"We held a short council, which resulted in a determination to retreat toward the mountains. I, for one, was tired of retreating, and refused to go farther, Baptiste joining me in my resolve. We took up a strong position in a place of difficult approach; and having our guns and ammunition and an abundance of arrows for defence, considering our numbers, we felt ourselves rather a strong garrison. The other three left us to our determination to fall together, and took to the prairie; but, changing their minds, they returned, and joined us in our position, deeming our means of defence better in one body than when divided. We all, therefore, determined, to sell our lives as dearly as possible should the enemy attack us, feeling sure that we could kill five times our number before we were overpowered, and that we should, in all probability, beat them off.

"By this time the supposed enemy had advanced toward us, and one of them hailed us in English as follows: —

"'Who are you?'

"'We are trappers.'

"'What company do you belong to?'

"'General Ashley's.'

"'Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!' they all shouted, and we, in turn, exhausted our breath in replying.

"'Is that you, Jim Beckwourth?' said a voice from the party.

"'Yes. Is that you, Castenga?' I replied.

"He answered in the affirmative, and there arose another hurrah.

"We inquired where their camp was. They informed us it was two miles below, at the ford. Baptiste and myself mounted our horses, descended the bank, plunged into the river, and were soon exchanging salutations with another of the general's old detachments. They also had taken us for Indians, and had gathered in their horses while we took up our position for defence.

"That night was spent in general rejoicing, in relating our adventures, and recounting our various successes and reverses. There is as much heartfelt joy experienced in falling in with a party of fellow-trappers in the mountains as is felt at sea when, after a long voyage, a friendly vessel just from port is spoken and boarded. In both cases a thousand questions are asked; all have wives, sweethearts, or friends to inquire after, and then the general news from the States is taken up and discussed.

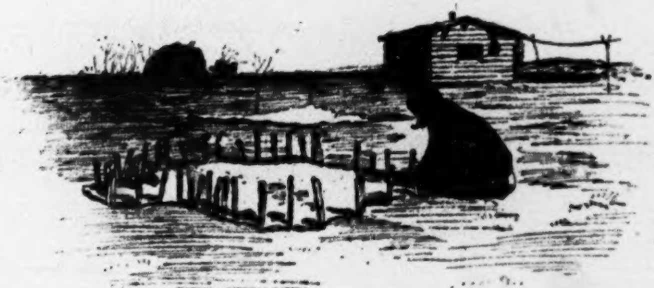
"The party we had fallen in with consisted of sixteen men. They had been two years out; had left Fort Yellowstone only a short time previously, and were provided with every necessity for a long excursion. They had not seen the general, and did not know he was in the mountains. They had lost some of their men, who had fallen victims to the Indians, but in trapping had been generally successful. Our little party also had done extremely well, and we felt great satisfaction in displaying to them seven or eight packets of sixty skins each. We related to them the murder of Le Brache, and every trapper boiled with indignation at the recital. All wanted instantly to start in pursuit, and revenge upon the Indians the perpetration of their treachery; but there was no probability of overtaking them, and they suffered their anger to cool down.

"The second day after our meeting, I proposed that the most experienced mountaineers of their party should return with Baptiste and myself to perform the burial rites of our friend. I proposed three men, with ourselves, as sufficient for the sixteen Indians, in case we should fall in with them, and they would certainly be enough for the errand if we met no one. My former comrades were too tired to return.

"We started and arrived at our unfortunate camp, but the body of our late friend was not to be found, though we discovered some of his long black hair clotted with blood.

"On raising the traps which we had set before our precipitate departure, we found a beaver in every one except four, which contained each a leg, the beavers having amputated them with their teeth. We then returned to our companions, and moved on to Willow Creek, where we were handy to the caches of our rendezvous at the Suck. It was now about June 1, 1822.

"Here we spent our time very pleasantly, occupying ourselves with hunting, fishing, target-shooting, foot-racing, gymnastic and sundry other exercises. The other detachments now came in, bringing with them quantities of peltry, all having met with very great success."



Tanning a Hide.

CHAPTER IV

CAPTAIN WILLIAM SUBLETTE'S EXPEDITION IN 1832 — THEY MEET NATHANIEL J. WYETH'S PARTY — ARRIVE AT GREEN RIVER VALLEY — ATTACKED BY INDIANS — ANTOINE GODIN SHOOTS A BLACKFOOT CHIEF — FIGHT BETWEEN WHITES, FLATHEADS, AND BLACKFEET — AN INDIAN HEROINE — MAJOR STEPHEN H. LONG'S SCIENTIFIC EXPEDITION IN 1820 — CAPTAIN BONNEVILLE'S EXPEDITION IN 1832 — LIEUTENANT JOHN C. FREMONT'S EXPEDITION IN 1842 TO THE WIND RIVER MOUNTAINS

IN 1882 Captain William Sublette,[1] a partner in the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, and one of the most active, intrepid, and renowned leaders in the trade, started on a trapping expedition up the Platte Valley. He was accompanied by Robert Campbell, another of the pioneers in the fur industry, and sixty men well mounted, with their camp equipage carried on packhorses.

At Independence, Missouri, he met a party commanded by Nathaniel J. Wyeth of Boston, Massachusetts. Mr. Wyeth, having conceived the idea that a profitable salmon fishery connected with the fur trade might be established at the mouth of the Columbia River, had accordingly invested a great deal of capital. He had calculated, as he supposed, for the Indian trade, and had enlisted in his employ a number of Eastern men who had never been West, and were totally unacquainted with its dangerous travel.

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[1] See Washington Irving's *Astoria*.

Wyeth and his men found themselves completely at a loss when they reached Independence, the then frontier post. None of them except the leader had ever seen an Indian or handled a rifle. They had neither guide nor interpreter, and were totally ignorant of the way to deal with the savages, or provide food for themselves during long marches over barren plains and wild mountains. In this predicament Captain Sublette found them, and in the bigness of his heart kindly took them in tow. Both parties travelled amicably together, and they arrived without accident on the upper branches of the Platte.

Sublette, Campbell, Wyeth, and their parties pursued their march westward unmolested, and arrived in the Green River Valley. While in camp one night on the bank of a small stream, toward morning a band of Indians burst upon them, yelling, whooping, and discharging a flight of arrows. No harm was done, however, excepting the wounding of a mule and the stampeding of several of their horses.

On the 17th of July, a small party of fourteen, led by Milton Sublette, brother of the captain, set out with the intention of proceeding to the southwest. They were accompanied by Sinclair and fifteen free trappers. Wyeth, also, and his New England band of beaver hunters and salmon fishers, now dwindled down to eleven, took this opportunity to prosecute their cruise in the wilderness, accompanied by such experienced pilots.

On the first day they proceeded about eight miles to the southeast, and encamped for the night. On the following morning, just as they were preparing to leave camp, they observed a moving mass pouring down a defile of the mountains. They at first supposed them to be another party of trappers, whose arrival had been daily expected. Wyeth, however, reconnoitred them with a spy-glass, and soon perceived they were Indians. They were divided into two bands, forming, in the whole, about one hundred and fifty persons, men, women, and children. Some were on horseback, fantastically painted and arrayed, with scarlet blankets fluttering in the wind. The greater part, however, were on foot. They had perceived the trappers before they were themselves discovered, and came down yelling and whooping into the plain. On nearer approach, they were ascertained to be Blackfeet.

One of the trappers of Sublette's brigade, a half-breed, named Antoine Godin,[1] now mounted his horse, and rode forth as if to hold a conference. In company with Antoine was a Flathead Indian, whose once powerful tribe had been completely broken down in their wars with the Blackfeet. Both of them, however, cherished the most vengeful hostility against these marauders of the mountains. The Blackfeet came to a halt. One of the chiefs advanced singly and unarmed, bearing the pipe of peace. This overture was certainly pacific; but Antoine and the Flathead were predisposed to hostility, and pretended to consider it a treacherous movement.

"Is your piece charged?" said Antoine to his companion.

"It is."

"Then cock it and follow me."

They met the Blackfoot chief half-way. He extended his hand in friendship. Antoine grasped it.

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[1] He was the son of an Iroquois hunter, who had been cruelly murdered by the Blackfeet on a small stream below the mountains which still bears his name.

"Fire!" cried he.

The Flathead levelled his piece, and brought the Blackfoot to the ground. Antoine snatched off his scarlet blanket, which was richly ornamented, and galloped away with it as a trophy to the camp, the bullets of the enemy whistling after him. The Indians immediately threw themselves into the edge of a swamp, among willows and cottonwood trees, interwoven with vines. Here they began to fortify themselves, the women digging a trench and throwing up a breastwork of logs and branches, deep hid in the bosom of the wood, while the warriors skirmished at the edge to keep the trappers at bay.

The latter took their station in front, whence they kept up a scattering fire. As to Wyeth, and his little band of "down easters," they were perfectly astounded by this second specimen of life in the wilderness; the men, being especially unused to bush-fighting and the use of the rifle, were at a loss how to act. Wyeth, however, acted as a skilful commander. He got all the horses into camp and secured them; then, making a breastwork of his packs of goods, he charged his men to remain in the garrison, and not to stir out of their fort. For himself, he mingled with the other leaders, determined to take his share in the conflict.

In the meantime, an express had been sent off to the rendezvous for reënforcements. Captain Sublette and his associate, Campbell, were at their camp when the express came galloping across the plain, waving his cap, and giving the alarm, "Blackfeet! Blackfeet! a fight in the upper part of the valley! — to arms! to arms!"

The alarm was passed from camp to camp. It was a common cause. Every one turned out with horse and rifle. The Nez Percés and Flatheads joined. As fast as the trappers could arm and mount they galloped off; the valley was soon alive with white men and Indians scouring at full speed.

Sublette ordered his party to keep to the camp, being recruits from St. Louis, and unused to Indian warfare, but he and his friend Campbell prepared for action. Throwing off their coats, rolling up their sleeves, and arming themselves with pistols and rifles, they mounted their horses and dashed forward among the first. As they rode along they made their wills in soldier-like style, each stating how his effects should be disposed of in case of his death, and appointing the other as his executor.

The Blackfeet warriors had supposed that the party of Milton Sublette was all the foe they had to deal with, and were astonished to behold the whole valley suddenly swarming with horsemen, galloping to the field of action. They withdrew into their fort, which was completely hidden from sight in the dark and tangled wood. Most of their women and children had retreated to the mountains. The trappers now sallied out and approached the swamp, firing into the thickets at random. The Blackfeet had a better sight of their adversaries, who were in the open field, and a half-breed was wounded in the shoulder.

When Captain Sublette arrived, he urged the men to penetrate the swamp and storm the fort, but all hung back in awe of the dismal horrors of the place, and the danger of attacking such desperadoes in their savage den. The very Indian allies, though accustomed to bush-fighting, regarded it as almost impenetrable, and full of frightful danger. Sublette was not to be turned from his purpose, but offered to lead the way into the swamp. Campbell stepped forward to accompany him. Before entering the perilous wood, Sublette took his brothers aside, and told them that in case he fell, Campbell, who knew his will, was to be his executor. This done, he grasped his rifle and pushed into the thickets, followed by Campbell. Sinclair, the partisan from Arkansas, was at the edge of the wood with his brother and a few of his men. Excited by the gallant example of the two friends, he pressed forward to share their dangers.

The swamp was produced by the labours of the beaver, which, by damming up the stream, had inundated a portion of the valley. The place was overgrown with woods and thickets, so closely matted and entangled that it was impossible to see ten paces ahead, and the three associates in peril had to crawl along, one after another, making their way by putting the branches and vines aside, but doing it with great caution, lest they should attract the eye of some lurking marksman. They took the lead by turns, each advancing some twenty yards at a time, and now and then hallooing to their men to come on. Some of the latter gradually entered the swamp, and followed a little distance in the rear.

They had now reached a more open part of the wood, and had glimpses of the rude fortress from between the trees. It was a mere breastwork, of logs and branches, with blankets, buffalo-robes, and the leather covers of lodges extended around the top as a screen. The movement of the leaders as they groped their way had been descried by the sharp-sighted enemy. As Sinclair, who was in the advance, was putting some branches aside, he was shot through the body. He fell on the spot. "Take me to my brother," said he to Campbell. The latter gave him in charge of some of the men, who conveyed him out of the swamp.

Sublette now took the advance. As he was reconnoitring the fort, he perceived an Indian peeping through an aperture. In an instant his rifle was levelled and discharged, and the ball struck the savage in the eye. While he was reloading he called to Campbell, and pointed out the hole to him: "Watch that place, and you will soon have a fair chance for a shot." Scarce had he uttered the words when a ball struck him in the shoulder, and almost wheeled him around. His first thought was to take hold of his arm with his other hand, and move it up and down. He ascertained, to his satisfaction, that the bone was not broken. The next moment he was so faint he could not stand. Campbell took him in his arms and carried him out of the thicket. The same shot that struck Sublette wounded another man in the head.

A brisk fire was now opened by the mountaineers from the wood, answered occasionally from the fort. Unluckily, the trappers and their allies, in searching for the fort, had got scattered, so that Wyeth and a number of Nez Percés approached it on the northwest side, while others did the same from the opposite quarter. A cross-fire thus took place, which occasionally did mischief to friends as well as foes. An Indian, close to Wyeth, was shot down by a ball which, he was convinced, had been sped from the rifle of a trapper on the other side of the fort.

The number of whites and their Indian allies had by this time so much increased, by arrivals from the rendezvous, that the Blackfeet were completely overmatched. They kept doggedly in their fort, however, making no effort to surrender. An occasional firing into the breastwork was kept up during the day. Now and then one of the Indian allies, in bravado, would rush up to the fort, fire over the ramparts, tear off a buffalo-robe or a scarlet blanket, and return with it in triumph to his comrades. Most of the savage garrison who fell, however, were killed in the first part of the attack.

At one time it was resolved to set fire to the fort, and the squaws belonging to the allies were employed to collect combustibles. This, however, was abandoned, the Nez Percés being unwilling to destroy the robes and blankets, and other spoils of the enemy, which they felt sure would fall into their hands.

The Indians, when fighting, are prone to taunt and revile each other. During one of the pauses of the battle the voice of a Blackfoot was heard.

"So long," said he, "as we had powder and ball, we fought you in the open field; when those were spent we retreated here to die with our women and children. You may burn us in our fort; but stay by our ashes, and you who are so hungry for fighting will soon have enough. There are four hundred lodges of our brethren at hand. They will soon be here — their arms are strong — their hearts are big — they will avenge us!"

This speech was translated two or three times by Nez Percés and creole interpreters. By the time it was rendered into English the chief was made to say that four hundred lodges of his tribe were attacking the encampment at the other end of the valley. Every one now hurried to the defence of the rendezvous. A party was left to watch the fort; the rest galloped off to the camp. As night came on, the trappers drew out of the swamp, and remained about the skirts of the wood. By morning their companions returned from the rendezvous, with the report that all was safe. As the day opened, they ventured within the swamp and approached the fort. All was silent. They advanced up to it without opposition. They entered; it had been abandoned in the night, and the Blackfeet had effected their retreat, carrying off their wounded on litters made of branches, leaving bloody traces on the grass. The bodies of ten Indians were found within the fort, among them the one shot in the eye by Sublette. The Blackfeet afterward reported that they had lost twenty-six warriors in this battle. Thirty-two horses were likewise found killed; among them were some of those recently carried off from Sublette's party, which showed that these were the very savages that had attacked him. They proved to be an advance party of the main body of Blackfeet, which had been upon Sublette's trail for some time. Five white men and one half-breed were killed and several wounded. Seven of the Nez Percés were also killed, and six wounded. They had an old chief who was reputed to be invulnerable. In the course of the action he was hit by a spent ball, and threw up blood; but his skin was unbroken. His people were now fully convinced that he was proof against a rifle-shot.

A striking circumstance is related as having occurred the morning after the battle. As some of the trappers and their Indian allies were approaching the fort, through the woods, they beheld an Indian woman, of noble form and features, leaning against a tree. Their surprise at her lingering there alone, to fall into the hands of her enemies, was dispelled when they saw the corpse of a warrior at her feet. Either she was so lost in her grief as not to perceive their approach, or a proud spirit kept her silent and motionless. The Indians set up a yell on discovering her, and before the trappers could interfere, her mangled body fell upon the corpse which she had refused to abandon. It is an instance of female devotion, even to the death, which is undoubtedly true.

After the battle the party of Milton Sublette, together with the free trappers, and Wyeth's New England band, remained some days at the rendezvous to see if the main body of Blackfeet intended to make an attack. Nothing of the kind occurred, so they once more put themselves in motion, and proceeded on their route toward the southwest.

Captain Sublette, having distributed his supplies, had intended to set off on his return to St. Louis, taking with him the peltries collected from the trappers and Indians. His wound, however, obliged him to postpone his departure. Several who were to have accompanied him became impatient at his delay. Among these was a young Bostonian, Mr. Joseph More, one of the followers of Mr. Wyeth, who had seen enough of mountain life and savage warfare, and was eager to return to the abodes of civilization. He and six others, among whom were a Mr. Foy of Mississippi, Mr. Alfred K. Stephens of St. Louis, and two grandsons of the celebrated Daniel Boone, set out together, in advance of Sublette's party, thinking they would make their own way through the mountains.

It was just five days after the battle of the swamp that these seven companions were making their way through Jackson's Hole, a valley not far from the Three Tetons, when, as they were descending a hill, a party of Blackfeet, who lay in ambush, started up with terrific yells. The horse of the young Bostonian, who was in front, wheeled round with affright, and threw his unskilful rider. The young man scrambled up the side of the hill, but, unaccustomed to such wild scenes, lost his presence of mind, and stood as if paralyzed on the edge of the bank, until the Blackfeet came up and slew him on the spot. His comrades had fled on the first alarm; but two of them, Foy and Stephens, seeing his danger, paused when they had got half-way up the hill, turned back, dismounted, and hastened to his assistance. Foy was instantly killed. Stephens was severely wounded, but escaped, to die five days afterward. The survivors returned to the camp of Captain Sublette, bringing tidings of this new disaster. That hardy leader, as soon as he could bear the journey, set out on his return to St. Louis, accompanied by Campbell. As they had a number of packhorses, richly laden with peltries, to convoy, they chose a different route through the mountains, out of the way, as they hoped, of the lurking bands of Blackfeet. They succeeded in making the frontier in safety.[1]

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[1] In 1820 Major Stephen H. Long, of the United States army, commanded an expedition through the Platte Valley and beyond, under the

On the 1st of May, 1832, Captain B. E. Bonneville, of the Seventh United States Infantry, having obtained leave of absence from Major-General Alexander Macomb, left Fort Osage, at his own expense, on a perilous exploration of the country to the Rocky Mountains and beyond.

His party consisted of one hundred and ten men, the majority of whom were experienced hunters and trappers. Their means of transportation were twenty wagons, drawn by oxen or by four mules each, loaded with ammunition, provisions, and some merchandise intended for trading with the Indians. The wagons were moved in two columns, the men marching in such a manner before and behind as to form an advance and rear guard. This caravan of Captain Bonneville's undoubtedly contained the first wagons that the Indians had ever seen, and as they passed through their country, they created a novel sensation among the savages. They examined everything about them minutely, and asked a thousand questions, an unusual change from their generally apathetic character.

On the march the captain invariably sent his hunters and scouts ahead, to reconnoitre the country, as well as to procure game for the command. On the 24th of May, as the caravan was slowly moving westward, the scouts came rushing back, waving their caps, and shouting, "Indians! Indians!"

A halt was immediately ordered, and it was discovered that a large party of Crows were on the river, just above where the caravan then was. The captain, knowing that the tribe was noted for warlike deeds and expertness in horse-stealing, gave orders to prepare for action. All were soon ready for any emergency, the party moved on in battle array, and in a short time about sixty Crow warriors emerged from the bluffs. They were painted in the

direction of the War Department. As its object was purely scientific, and its details uninteresting to the general reader, it is omitted here.

most approved style of savage art, well mounted on fine ponies, and evidently ready for a battle. They approached the caravan in true Indian method, cavorting around on their spirited animals, rushing on as if they intended to make a charge, but when at the proper distance suddenly opened right and left, wheeled around the travellers at the same instant, whooping and yelling diabolically. Their first wild demonstration of spoiling for a fight having cooled down, they stopped, and the chief rode up to the captain, extended his hand, which of course he took; and after a pipe was smoked, nothing could exceed the spirit of friendliness that prevailed.

They were on a raid against a band of Cheyennes who had attacked their village in the night and killed one of their tribe. They had already been on the trail for twenty-five days, and said they were determined never to return to their homes until they had had their revenge.

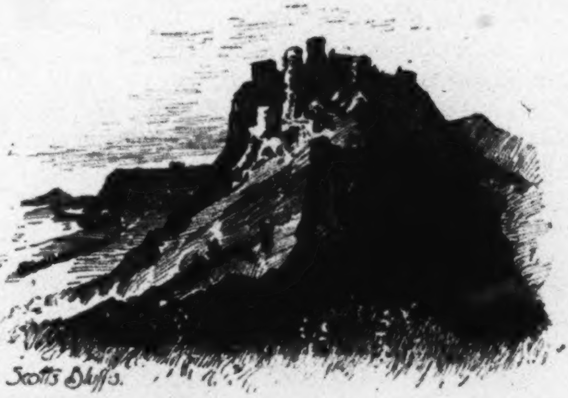
They had been secretly hanging on the trail of Captain Bonneville's party and were astonished at the wagons and oxen, but were especially amazed by the appearance of a cow and calf quietly walking alongside. They supposed them to be some kind of tame buffalo. They regarded them as "big medicine," but when it was told them that the white men would trade the calf for a horse, their wonder ceased, their estimation of its wonderful power sank to zero, and they declined to make the exchange.

On the 2d of June the Platte River was reached, about twenty-five miles below Grand Island. Captain Bonneville measured the stream at that point, found it to be twenty-two hundred yards wide, and from three to six feet deep, the bottom full of quicksand.

On the 11th of the same month the party arrived at the forks of the Platte, but finding it impossible to cross on account of the quicksand, they travelled for two days along the south branch, trying to discover a safe fording-place.

At last they camped, took off the bodies of the wagons, covered them with buffalo-hides, and smearing them with tallow and ashes, thus turned them into boats. In these they ferried themselves and their effects across the stream, which was six hundred yards wide, with a very swift current.

After successfully crossing the river, the line of march was toward the North Fork, a distance of nine miles from their ford. Terribly annoyed by swarms of gnats and mosquitoes, they followed the meanderings of the stream, and on the evening of the 17th arrived at a beautiful grove, resonant with the songs of birds, the first they had heard since leaving the banks of the Missouri.


Scotts Bluffs.

Captain Bonneville made a camp at Chimney Rock, the height of which, according to his triangulation, was one hundred and seventy-five yards. On the 21st he made camp amidst the high and beetling cliffs, known a few years afterward as Scott's Bluffs.

The route of Captain Bonneville's march was generally along the bank of the Platte River, but frequently he was compelled, because of the steep bluffs which bounded it, to make inland detours.

In July he camped on a branch of the Sweetwater, which by measurement was sixty feet wide and four or five deep, flowing between low banks over a sandy soil. At that point numerous herds of buffalo were seen.

On the 12th of July, the caravan reached Laramie's Fork, and, abandoning the Platte, made a detour to the southwest. In two days afterward they camped on the bank of the Sweetwater. Up that stream they moved for several days, and on the 20th of July first caught a glimpse of the Rocky Mountains, which they crossed and then went on to the Pacific coast.

On the 13th of July of the following year after his tour through the Rocky Mountains, Bonneville arrived in the Green River Valley, which he now found covered in every direction with buffalo carcasses. It was evident that the Indians had recently been there and in great numbers. Alarmed at what he saw, the captain halted as soon as night came on, and sent out his scouts to the trappers' rendezvous at Horse Creek, where he expected to meet a party. When the scouts returned with some of the trappers, his mind was relieved by the information that the great slaughter of the buffaloes had been made by a band of friendly Shoshones.

The Green River Valley, at the time of Captain Bonneville's visit, was one of the general rendezvous of the trappers, traders, and Indians. There he got together a band of some of the most experienced men of the mountains, and determined to continue to explore into unknown regions farther west. His objective point was the Great Salt Lake, of which he had heard such wonderful accounts, and on the 24th of July he started from the Green River Valley with forty men to explore that inland sea.

In the spring of 1835 Captain Bonneville returned to the Green River Valley, and from there pursued his course down the Platte, reaching the frontier settlements on the 22d of August, having been absent over three years. During all that time he had made no report to the War Department, which thought he had perished on his venturesome journey, and his name was stricken from the rolls of the army. Several months after his arrival in Washington, and a satisfactory explanation having been rendered, he was restored to his position.[1]

On the 22d of May, 1842, Lieutenant John C. Fremont, of the United States Corps of Army Engineers, arrived at St. Louis in pursuance of orders from the War Department, to command an exploring expedition westward to the Wind River Mountains. On the 10th of June he started with the celebrated Kit Carson as his chief guide; his route was up the Kansas River to the Blue, thence across to the Platte, which he reached on the 25th. The principal object of his expedition was a survey of the North Fork of that river. He found the width of the stream, immediately below the junction of its two principal branches, to be 5350 feet. Hunting buffalo and an occasional Indian scare were the only important incidents of his march up the valley. The expedition returned by the same route and arrived at the mouth of the Platte on the 1st of October.

Before reaching Laramie's Fork, he met on the 28th of June a party of fourteen trappers, in the employ of the American Fur Company, making their way on foot with their blankets and light camp equipage on their backs. Two months previously they had started from the mouth of the Laramie River in boats loaded with furs destined for the St. Louis market. They had taken advantage of the June freshet, and were rapidly carried down as far as

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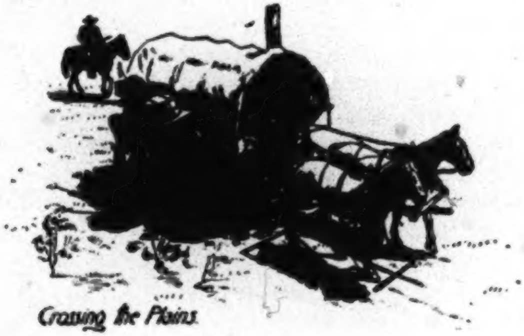
[1] Captain Bonneville attained the rank of colonel, was retired in 1861, and died on the 12th of June, 1878.

Scott's Bluffs. There the water spread out into the valley, and the stream was so shallow they were compelled to unload the principal part of their cargo. This they secured as well as possible, and left a few of their men to guard it. They continued struggling on with their boats in the sand and mud fifteen or twenty days longer, then, farther progress being impossible, they cached their remaining furs and property in trees on the bank of the river, and, each man carrying what he could on his back, started on foot for St. Louis. The party was entirely out of tobacco when they were met by Fremont, who kindly gave them enough to last them on their homeward journey.

During the next decade the Platte Valley witnessed a wonderful change. From the habitat of the lonely trapper, hunting on its many streams, it became the chosen route of a vast migration, seeking possession of the virgin soil of far-off Oregon, or attracted by the discovery of gold in California. The hegira of the Mormons to the sequestered basin of the Great Salt Lake also swelled the stream, and was followed soon after by the establishment of the overland stage, the pony express, and the building of the Union Pacific Railroad.



Crossing the Plains

CHAPTER V

TRADING-POSTS OF THE GREAT FUR COMPANIES — FORT VASQUES — FORT LARAMIE — FORT PLATTE — FORT BRIDGER — INCIDENTS AT FORT PLATTE — A DRUNKEN SPREE — DEATH AND BURIAL OF SUSU-CEICHA — INSULT TO BIG EAGLE — BULL TAIL'S EFFORT TO SELL HIS DAUGHTER FOR A BARREL OF WHISKEY — A RARE INSTANCE OF A TRADER'S HONOUR

AS early as the first decade of the present century, the great fur companies sent out expeditions up the valley of the Platte in the charge of their agents, to trap the beaver and other animals valuable for their beautiful skins. The hardships of these pioneers in the beginning of a trade which in a short time assumed gigantic proportions are a story of suffering and privation which has few parallels in the history of the development of our mid-continent region. Until the establishment of the several trading-posts, the lives of these men were continuous struggles for existence, as no company could possibly transport provisions sufficient to last beyond the most remote settlements, and the men were compelled to depend entirely upon their rifles for a supply of food. When posts were located at convenient distances from each other in the desolate country where their vocation was carried on, the chances of the trapper for regular meals every day were materially enhanced. Before the establishment of these rendezvous, where everything necessary for his comfort was kept, the trapper subsisted on deer, bear-meat, buffalo, and wild turkeys—the latter were found in abundance everywhere. In times of great scarcity, he was frequently compelled to resort to dead horses. His coffee, and perhaps a scant supply of flour which he had brought from the last settlement, would rarely suffice until he reached the foot of the mountains; and even when obtainable the price was so exorbitant that but few of the early adventurers could indulge in such luxuries.

The first trading-post was established at the mouth of Clear Creek, in 1832, by Louis Vasquez, and named Fort Vasquez, after its proprietor, but never grew into much importance and was soon abandoned.

Fort Laramie, one of the most celebrated rendezvous of the trappers, was erected in 1834, by William Sublette and Robert Campbell of St. Louis, agents of the American Fur Company. It was first called Fort William, in honour of Sublette; later Fort John, and finally christened Fort Laramie, after the river which took its name from Joseph Laramie, a French-Canadian trapper of the earliest fur-hunting period, who was murdered by the Indians near the mouth of the river. It was located in the immediate region of the Ogallalla and Brule bands of the great Sioux nation, and not very remote from that of the Cheyennes and Arapahoes.

In 1835 the fort was sold to Milton Sublette, Jim Bridger, and others of the American Fur Company, and the year following was by them rebuilt at a cost of ten thousand dollars. It remained a private establishment until 1849, the year of the discovery of gold in California, when the government bought and transformed it into a military post, to awe the savages who infested the trail to the Pacific, which had then become the great highway of the immense exodus from the Eastern states to the gold regions of that coast.

The original structure was built in the usual style of all Indian trading-stations of that day, of adobes, or sun-dried bricks. It was enclosed by walls twenty feet high and four feet thick, encompassing an area two hundred and fifty feet long by two hundred wide. At the diagonal northwest and southwest corners, adobe bastions were erected, commanding every approach to the place.

Fort Larned

The number of buildings were twelve in all: there were five sleeping-rooms, kitchen, warehouse, icehouse, meat-house, blacksmith shop, and carpenter shop. The enclosed corral had a capacity for two hundred animals. The corral was separated from the buildings by a partition, and the area in which the buildings were located was a square, while the corral was a rectangle, into which, at night, the horses and mules were secured. In the daytime, too, when the presence of Indians indicated danger of the animals being stolen, they were run into the enclosure.

The roofs of the buildings within the square were close against the walls of the fort, and in case of necessity could be utilized as a banquette from which to repulse any attack of the savages. The main entrance to the enclosure had two gates, with an arched passage intervening. A small window opened from an adjoining room into this passage, so that when the gates were closed and barred any one might still hold communication, through this narrow aperture, with those within. Suspicious characters, especially the savages, could do their trading without the necessity of being admitted into the fort proper. At times when danger was apprehended from an attack by the Indians, the gates were kept shut and all business transacted through the window.

About thirty men were usually employed at Fort Laramie when the trade was at its height, as that station monopolized nearly the entire Indian trade of the whole region tributary to it. There the famous frontiersmen, Kit Carson, Jim Bridger, Jim Baker, Jim Beckwourth, and others, who in those remote times constituted the pioneers of the primitive civilization of the country, made their headquarters.

The officials of the fur companies stationed at Fort Laramie ruled with an absolute authority. They were as potent in their sway as the veriest despot, for they had no one to dispute their right to lord it over all. The nearest army outposts were seven hundred miles to the east, and, like the viceroys of Spain after the conquest of Mexico, they were a law unto themselves.

In its palmy days Fort Laramie swarmed with women and children, whose language, like their complexions, was much mixed. All lived almost exclusively on buffalo-meat dried in the sun, and their hunters had to go sometimes fifty miles to find a herd of buffaloes. After a while there were a few domestic cattle introduced, and the conditions changed somewhat.

No military frontier post in the United States was so beautifully located as Fort Laramie. Surrounded by big bluffs at the intersection of the Laramie and Platte rivers, forming a valley unsurpassed in the fertility of its soil, together with the richness of its natural vegetation, it was an oasis in the desert. The glory of the once charming place has departed forever. It was abandoned by the government a few years ago, as it was no longer a military necessity, the savage tribes which it watched having either become tame or removed to far-off reservations.

In 1826 Jim Bridger joined General Ashley's trapping expedition, and eleven years afterward, in 1837, built Fort Bridger, for a long time one of the most famous of the trading-posts. It was located on the Black Fork of Green River[1] where that stream branched into three principal channels, forming several large islands, upon one of which the fort was erected. It was constructed of two adjoining log houses, with sod roofs, enclosed by a fence of pickets eight feet high, and, as was usual, the offices and sleeping-apartments opened into a square, protected from attacks by the Indians by a massive timber gate. Into the corral all the animals were driven at night to guard them from being stolen, or devoured by wild beasts. The fort was inhabited by about fifty whites, Indians, and half-breeds. The fort was the joint property of Bridger and Vasquez. Upon the Mormon occupation of the region the owners were obliged to abandon it, on account of disagreements with that sect, in 1858.

Fort Platte, another trading-post belonging to the American Fur Company, was situated about three-fourths of a mile above the mouth of the Laramie River, on the left bank of the North Platte, and constructed in the same general way described in the preceding paragraphs. As it is naturally to be supposed, there existed always a desperate rivalry between the two forts. Some of the scenes enacted there long ago are full of blood-curdling adventure and reckless indifference to the preservation of life. The following is a true picture of one of the annual gatherings of the Indian trappers who came there to dispose of their season's furs, more than fifty years ago: —

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[1] The Black Fork of Green River is in the southwest corner of the state of Wyoming.

"The night of our arrival at Fort Platte was the signal for a grand jollification by all hands, with two or three exceptions, who soon got most gloriously drunk, and such an illustration of the beauties of harmony as was then presented would have rivalled Bedlam itself, or even the famous council-chamber beyond the Styx.

"Yelling, screeching, firing, fighting, swearing, drinking, and such like interesting performances were kept up without intermission, — and woe to the poor fellow who looked for repose that night. He might have as well thought of sleeping with a thousand cannons booming at his ears.

"The scene was prolonged till sundown the next day, and several made their egress from this beastly carousal minus shirts and coats, with swollen eyes, bloody noses, and empty pockets, — the latter circumstance will be understood upon the mere mention of the fact that liquor was sold for four dollars a pint!

"The day following was ushered in by the enactment of another scene of comico-tragical character.

"The Indians camped in the vicinity, being extremely solicitous to imitate the example of their illustrious predecessors, commenced their demands for fire-water as soon as the first tints of morning began to paint the east; and, before the sun had told an hour of his course, they were pretty well advanced in the state of "How come you so?" and seemed to exercise their musical powers in wonderful rivalry with their white brethren.

"Men, women, and children were seen running from lodge to lodge with vessels of liquor, inviting their friends and relatives to drink; while whooping, singing, drunkenness, and trading for fresh supplies to administer to the demands of intoxication had evidently become the order of the day. Soon individuals were seen passing from one another, with mouths full of the coveted fire-water, drawing the lips of favoured friends to close contact, as if to kiss, and ejecting the contents of their own into the eager mouths of others, — thus affording the delighted recipients tests of fervent esteem in the heat and strength of their strange draught.

"At this stage of the game the American Fur Company, as was charged, commenced to deal out to them gratuitously, strong drugged liquor for the double purpose of preventing the sale of the article by its competitor in trade, and of creating sickness, or inciting contention among the Indians while under the influence of sudden intoxication, hoping thereby to induce the latter to charge its ill effects upon an opposite source, and thus by destroying the credit of its rival to monopolize the whole trade.

"It is hard to predict with certainty what would have been the result of this reckless policy, had it been continued through the day. Already its effects became apparent, and small knots of drunken Indians were seen in various directions, quarreling, preparing to fight, or fighting, while others lay stretched upon the ground in helpless impotency, or staggered from place to place with all the revolting attendants of intoxication.

"The drama, however, was brought to a temporary close by an incident which made a strange contrast in its immediate results.

"One of the head chiefs of the Brule village, in riding at full speed from Fort John to Fort Platte, being a little too drunk to navigate, plunged headlong from his horse, and broke his neck when within a few rods of his destination. Then was a touching display of confusion and excitement. Men and squaws commenced squalling like children,—the whites were bad, very bad, said they, in their grief, to give Susu-Ceicha the fire-water that caused his death. But the height of their censure was directed against the American Fur Company, as its liquor had done the deed.

"The corpse of the deceased chief was brought to the fort by his relatives with a request that the whites should assist at his burial; but they were in a sorry plight for such a service. There were found some sufficiently sober for the task, however, and they accordingly commenced operations.

"A scaffold was erected for the reception of the body, which, in the meantime, had been fitted for its last airy tenement. The duty was performed in the following manner: It was first washed, then arrayed in the habiliments last worn by the deceased during life, and sewed in several envelopes of lodge-skin with his bows and arrows and pipe. This done, all things were ready for the proposed burial.

"The corpse was borne to its final resting-place, followed by a throng of relatives and friends. While moving onward with the dead, the train of mourners filled the air with lamentations and rehearsals of the virtues and meritorious deeds of their late chief.

"Arrived at the scaffold, the corpse was carefully reposed upon it facing the east, while beneath its head was placed a small sack of meat, tobacco, and vermilion, with a comb, looking-glass, and knife, and at its feet a small banner that had been carried in the procession. A covering of scarlet cloth was then spread over it, and the body firmly lashed to its place by long strips of rawhide. This done, the horse of the chieftain was produced as a sacrifice for the benefit of his master in his long journey to the celestial hunting-grounds.

"Then first, encircling it at a respectful distance, were seated the old men, next the young men and the warriors, and next the squaws and children. Etespa-huska (The Long Bow), eldest son of the deceased, thereupon commenced speaking, while the weeping throng ceased its tumult to listen to his words.

"'O Susu-Ceicha! thy son bemourns thee, even as were wont the fledglings of the war-eagle to cry for the one that nourished them, when thy swift arrow had laid him in the dust. Sorrow fills the heart of Etespa-huska; sadness crushes it to the ground and sinks it beneath the sod upon which he treads.

"'Thou hast gone, O Susu-Ceicha! Death hath conquered thee, whom none but death could conquer; and who shall now teach thy son to be brave as thou wast brave; to be good as thou wast good; to fight the foe of thy people and acquaint thy chosen ones with the war-song of triumph; to deck his lodge with the scalps of the slain, and bid the feet of the young move swiftly in the dance? And who shall teach Etespa-huska to follow the chase and plunge his arrows into the yielding sides of the tired bull?'

"Thus for half an hour did the young man tell of the virtues and great deeds of his father, and the moment he had finished, a tremendous howl of grief burst from the whole assemblage, men, women, and children alike. When the wailing ceased they all returned to their respective lodges.

"The sad event of the day put a stop to the dissipation of the savages, and not long afterward they commenced to pull down their respective lodges, and removed to the neighbourhood of the buffalo, for the purpose of selecting their winter quarters.

"Two weeks later a band of Brules arrived in the vicinity of the fort and opened a brisk trade in liquor by indulging in a drunken spree.

"The savages crowded the fort houses seeking articles, and soon became a terrible nuisance. One room in particular was constantly thronged to the exclusion of its regular occupants, when the latter, losing all patience with the savages, adopted the following plan to get rid of them.

"After closely covering the chimney, by the aid of some half-rotten chips a dense smoke was raised, the doors and windows being closed at the same time to prevent its escape, and in an instant the apartment became filled to the point of suffocation, — too much so for the Indians, who gladly made a precipitate retreat.

"They were told it was the 'Long-Knife Medicine.'[1] During the visit of the savages at the fort, a warrior called 'Big Eagle' was struck over the head by a half-drunken trader, an incident which came very near terminating seriously, but fortunately did not. It might have ended in the massacre of all the whites had not some of the more level-headed promptly interfered and with much effort succeeded in pacifying the enraged chief by presenting him with a horse.

"At first the savage would admit of no compromise short of the offender's blood. He had been struck by the white man, and blood alone must atone for the aggression. Unless that should wipe out the disgrace he could never again hold up his head among his people, — they would call him a coward, and say a white man struck the Big Eagle and he dared not resent it."

An Indian considers it the greatest indignity to receive a blow from any one, even from his own brother; and unless the affair is settled by the bestowal of a trespass offering on the part of the aggressor, he is almost sure to seek revenge, either through blood or the destruction of property. This is more an especial characteristic of the Sioux than of any other of the savage tribes.

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[1] The name "Long-Knife" was applied by the Indians to the command of Lewis and Clarke when they crossed the continent in 1804–5, and it has remained as a name for the whites ever since.

The liquor-traffic was a most infamous one, as an abundance of facts could prove.

In November, 1855, the American Fur Company, from Fort John, sent a quantity of their drugged liquor to an Indian village on the Chugwater, as a gift, for the purpose of preventing the sale of that article by their competitors in trade. The consequence was that the poor creatures all got beastly drunk, and a fight ensued, in which two chiefs, Bull Bear and Yellow Lodge, and six of their personal friends were murdered. Fourteen others who took part in the fracas were badly wounded. Soon afterward another affair of the same character occurred, and resulted in the death of three of the savages. Many were killed in like quarrels in the several Indian villages.

The liquor used in this nefarious trade was generally third or fourth proof whiskey, which, after being diluted by a mixture of three parts water, was sold to the savages at the exorbitant rate of three cups for a single buffalo-robe, each cup holding about three gills. That was not all: sometimes the cup was not more than half filled; then again the act of measuring was also a rascally transaction, for when the poor savage became so drunk that he could not see, he was cheated,—more water was added, the unlucky purchaser not receiving more than one-fourth of what he paid for. There were still other modes of cheating poor Lo.

To further show how demoralizing the traffic was I will relate an instance: "Old Bull Tail," a chief of the Sioux, had an only daughter, who was named Chint-zille. She was very handsome as savage beauty goes, and the old chief really loved her, for the North American Indian is possessed of as much devotion to his family as is to be found in the most cultivated of the white race; but the old fellow was inordinately fond of getting drunk, and at one time, not having the wherewithal to procure the necessary liquor, made up his mind that he would trade his daughter for a sufficient quantity.

One morning he entered the store of a trader, accompanied by Chint-zille. The following dialogue took place:

"Bull Tail is welcome to the lodge of the Long-Knife; but why is his daughter, the pride of his heart, bathed in tears? It pains me that one so beautiful should weep."

The old chief answered: "Chint-zille is a foolish girl. Her father loves her, and therefore she cries."

"There should be greater cause for grief than that."

"The Long-Knife speaks well."

"How then can she sorrow? Tell her to speak to me, that I may whisper words of comfort in her ear."

"I will tell you, Long-Knife: Bull Tail loves his daughter very much; he loves Long-Knife very much! he loves them both very much. The Great Spirit has put the thought into his mind that both alike might be his children; then would his heart leap for joy at the twice-spoken name of father!"

"I do not understand the meaning of Bull Tail's words."

"Sure, Long-Knife, you are slow to understand! Bull Tail would give his daughter to the Long-Knife. Does not Long-Knife love Chint-zille?"

"If I should say no, my tongue would lie; Long-Knife has no wife, and who, like the lovely Chint-zille, is so worthy that he should take her to his bosom? How can I show my gratitude to her noble father?"

"The gift is free, and Bull Tail will be too glad in its acceptance, his friends will all be glad with him. But that they may bless the Long-Knife, let him fill up the hollow-wood[1] with fire-water, and Bull Tail will take it to his lodge; then Chint-zille will be yours."

"But Chint-zille grieves, she does not love the Long-Knife."

"Chint-zille is foolish. Let the Long-Knife measure the fire-water, and she shall be yours."

"No, Long-Knife will not do this; Chint-zille should never be the wife of the man she does not love."

The old chief pleaded for a long time with the trader to take the girl and give him the liquid, but the trader was inexorable; he would not form any such tangling alliance, so the old chief failed to get the liquor, and he left the house with mortification and shame depicted on his withered face.

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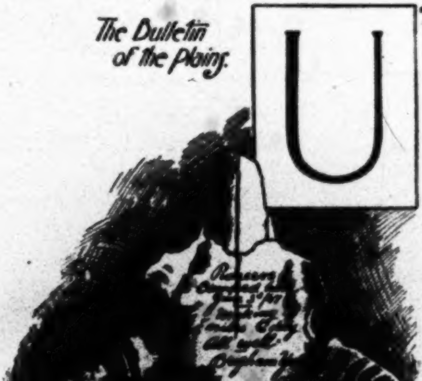
[1] A keg.

Fort Bridger
Black Fork of Green River

CHAPTER VI

THE MOST DESOLATE OF DESERTS MADE TO BLOSSOM AS THE ROSE — THE MORMON HEGIRA — PILGRIMS' OUTFIT — CURIOUS GUIDE-POSTS — THE HAND-CART EXPEDITION — SUFFERINGS AND HARDSHIPS DURING THE EXODUS — AN IMPENDING WAR — GENERAL HARNEY'S EXPEDITION — MORMON TACTICS — DESTROY THE SUPPLIES — PRIVATIONS OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY — PRESIDENT BACKS DOWN — SALT LAKE CITY — BRIGHAM YOUNG'S VISION — THE TEMPLE


The Bulletin of the Plains.

UTAH was settled in 1847 by a religious community of people generally known by the name of Mormons, but they style themselves, "The Latter-day Saints of the Church of Jesus Christ."

In the great valley of a vast inland sea, the existence of which was unknown to the world seventy-five years ago, whose surroundings were a desert in the most rigid definition of the term, a great commonwealth has been established unparalleled in the history of its origin by that of any other of the civilized countries of the world.

Out of the most desolate of our vast arid interior areas, in less than half a century has been evolved not only a magnificent garden spot, but a great city with all the adjuncts of our most modern civilization. Rich in its architecture, progressive in its art, with a literature that is marvellous when the conditions from which it has sprung are seriously considered, the Mormon community meets all the demands of our ever advancing civilization.

Neither the love of gold, nor the cupidity of conquest, those characteristics which have subordinated other portions of the New World to the restless ambition of man, were the causes that have revolutionized both the physical character and the social conditions of the now wealthy and prosperous state of Utah. As Bancroft very forcibly states: "Utah was settled upon an entirely new idea of God's revelation to the world. Old faiths have been worked over and over; colonies have been built upon those tenets, but never before have any results comparable to those which characterize that of the Mormon faith been attained, in founding a community, based as it is upon an entirely new religion."

Originating east of the Mississippi, perhaps no sect in modern times has been so persecuted as was that of the Mormons in their early days. So great and unbearable had this persecution become that it was determined by their leaders to seek some remote spot where they could worship according to their own ideas, without fear of molestation.

The Mormon emigration to Utah was seriously considered by Brigham Young years before 1847, the date of their exodus. It is claimed that he was but carrying out the plans of Joseph Smith, who early in 1842 said that his people "would yet be driven to the Rocky Mountains, where they would be able to build a city of their own free from all interference."

In confirmation of this the following extract from Heber C. Kimball's diary shows that a migration to some point west of the Rocky Mountains was contemplated: "Nauvoo Temple, December 31, 1845, — President Young and myself are superintending the operations of the day, examining maps with reference to selecting a location for the Saints west of the Rocky Mountains, and reading the various works which have been written and published by travellers in those regions."

When it had been determined to leave for the Great Basin, winter quarters were established on the Elk Horn River; and on the morning of the 9th of April, 1847, the migration began, but was not fairly inaugurated until the 14th. The party were allowed a wagon, two oxen, two milch cows, and a tent, to every ten of their number. For each wagon there was supplied a thousand pounds of flour, fifty pounds of rice, sugar, and bacon, thirty of beans, twenty of dried apples or peaches, twenty-five of salt, five of tea, a gallon of vinegar, and ten bars of soap.

Every able-bodied man was compelled to carry a rifle or musket. His wagon served for bed and kitchen, and was occasionally used as a boat in crossing the streams. A day's journey averaged about thirteen miles, with a rest at noon to dine and to allow the cattle to graze.

For the benefit of those who were following them, the first party of Mormons adopted some curious devices to inform their friends among the latter how they were progressing. For post-offices, they used the bleached buffalo-skulls found on the prairie, which, after the letters were placed inside, they suspended from the limbs of trees along the route. For guide-posts and to indicate their camping-places, they painted on the bald fronts of other buffalo-skulls the date and number of miles they had made.

After over three months of hardship and suffering, this party of pioneers reached the portals of their destination.

On the 19th of July, 1847, two of the number started from the advance camp soon after sunrise to make a reconnoissance of the road, which left Cañon Creek and ran along through a ravine to the west. "The ascent was gradual for about four miles, when the dividing ridge was reached. Here the two pioneers tied their horses, and on foot ascended a near-by mountain, Big Mountain by name, to obtain a glimpse of the country. Previously, from the peaks of that neighbourhood, the pathfinder of the pioneer band had been met by a series of towering, snow-capped mountains, piled seemingly one upon the other, ever greeting his tired vision as he gazed eagerly westward, looking for the Promised Land. But this time a different view was exposed. To the southwest, through a vista of gradually-sloping mountains, through an opening in the cañons, the light blue and the fleecy white clouds above seemed to be sinking into a plain of gold. Two small portions of a level prairie were visible, and beyond rose a series of blue mountains, their peaks tipped with snow. It was the Valley of the Great Salt Lake!

"From the summit of the Big Mountain, they gazed long and earnestly on the glorious view. First they looked upon the high walls surrounding their position at the time, but ever would their eyes turn longingly to that little panorama of life and colour which appeared through a gap in the mountains, the yellow and green of the valley, the blue and white of the sky, with a foreground of dark mountains clothed in darker shrubbery. The Oquirrhs rose majestically in the centre of the picture, and far beyond them a dim, shadowy outline of the Onaqui range, which completed the glorious landscape."

Previous to their arrival in the valley, on the 23d of June, the Mormons met Jim Bridger and two of his employees en route to Fort Laramie. Bridger was told that he was the man of all men whom they had been looking for, upon which he advised them to camp right where they were, and he would tell them all he knew about the country and the region around the Great Basin. Camp was accordingly made, Bridger took supper with Brigham Young, and the information he had to impart was given in the old trapper's usual irregular way. Learning that the destination of the Mormons was in the Desert of the Salt Lake Valley, Bridger offered to give one thousand dollars for the first ear of corn raised there. "Wait a little," said the president of the Mormons, "and we will show you." In describing to Brigham Young the Great Salt Lake, which he called "Sevier Lake," he said that some of his men had spent three months going around it in canoes hunting beaver, and that the distance was five hundred and fifty miles.

Brigham Young

In 1856 thousands of European converts to the new religion emigrated to Utah. On their arrival in this country, however, they had very little spare cash. It was therefore decided by those in authority that they should cross the plains with hand-carts, in which was to be hauled their baggage. Wagons were provided for tents, provisions, and those who were not able to walk.

In a circular published in Liverpool by the Presidency of the British Isles, among other things it recited that

"The Lord, through his Prophet, says of the poor, let them gird up their loins, and walk through, and nothing shall hinder them."

Iowa City was the point where the poor emigrants were outfitted and received their hand-carts. These were somewhat primitive in construction: "The shafts being about five feet long, and of hickory or oak, with cross-pieces, one of them serving for a handle, forming the bed of the cart, under the centre of which was a wooden axletree, the wheels being also made of wood, with a light iron band, and the entire weight of the vehicle about sixty pounds. Better carts were provided in subsequent years."

Handcarts used in the Mormon march to Utah.

To each one hundred persons were furnished twenty hand-carts, five tents, three or four milch cows, and a wagon with three yoke of oxen to convey the provisions and camp equipage. The quantity of clothing and bedding was limited to seventeen pounds per capita, and the freight of each cart, including cooking utensils, was about one hundred pounds.

One of the companies reached the old winter quarters near the middle of August, and there held a meeting to decide whether they should continue the journey or encamp for the winter. They had yet more than a thousand miles to travel, and with their utmost efforts could not expect to arrive in the valley until late in November. The matter was left with the elders, all of whom, excepting one named Levi Savage, counselled them to go forward and trust in the Lord, who would surely protect them. Savage declared that they should trust, also, to such common sense as the Lord had given them. From his certain knowledge, the company, containing as it did so large a number of the aged and infirm, of women and children, could not cross the mountains thus late in the season without much suffering, sickness, and death. He was overruled and rebuked for want of faith. "Brethren and sisters," he replied, "what I have said I know to be true; but seeing you are going forward, I will go with you. May God in his mercy preserve us." The company set forth from their camp on the 18th, and on each hand-cart was now placed a ninety-eight pound sack of flour, as the wagons could not carry the entire load. At first they travelled about fifteen miles a day, although delays were caused by the breaking of wheels and axles. The heat and aridity of the plains and mountains speedily made many of the cart-wheels rickety and unable to sustain their burdens without frequent repairs. Some shod the axles of their carts with old leather, others with tin from the plates and kettles of their mess outfit; and for grease they used their allowance of bacon, and even their soap, of which they had but little. On reaching Wood River the cattle stampeded, and thirty head were lost, the remainder being only sufficient to allow one yoke to each wagon. The beef cattle, milch cows, and heifers were used as draft animals, but were of little service, and it was found necessary to place another sack of flour on each hand-cart. The issue of beef was then stopped, the cows gave no milk, and the daily ration was reduced to a pound of flour, with a little rice, sugar, coffee, and bacon, an allowance which only furnished breakfast for some of the men, who fasted for the remainder of the day.

While encamped on the North Fork of the Platte the emigrants were overtaken by another party of elders, returning from foreign missions, who gave them what encouragement they could. "Though it might storm on their right and on their left the Lord would keep open their way before them, and they would reach Zion in safety." After camping with them for one night, the elders went on their way, promising to leave provisions for them at Fort Laramie if possible, and to send them aid from Salt Lake City. On reaching Laramie no provisions were found, and rations were again reduced, men able to work receiving twelve ounces of flour daily, women and old men nine ounces, and children from four to eight ounces.

As the emigrants travelled along the banks of the Sweetwater, the nights became severe, and their bed-covering was now insufficient. Before them were the mountains clad almost to the base with snow, where already the storms of winter were gathering. Gradually the old and infirm began to droop, and soon deaths became frequent, the companies seldom leaving their camping-ground without burying one or more of the party. Then able-bodied men began to succumb, a few of them continuing to pull their carts before they died, and one or two even on the day of their deaths. On the morning when the first snow-storm occurred, the last ration of flour was issued, and a march of sixteen miles was before them to the nearest camping-ground on the Sweetwater. The task seemed hopeless, but at noon a wagon drove up, containing Joseph A. Young and Stephen Taylor, from Salt Lake City, who told them that a train of supplies would reach them in a day or two. Thus encouraged, the emigrants pushed forward. By doubling their teams, and by the strongest of the party helping the weak to drag their carts, all reached the camping-ground, though some of the cattle perished, and during the night five persons died of cold and exhaustion.

In the morning the snow was a foot deep, and there remained only two barrels of biscuits, a few pounds of sugar and dried apples, and a quarter of a sack of rice. Two of the disabled cattle were killed, their carcasses issued for beef, and on this and a small dole of biscuits the emigrants were told that they must subsist until supplies reached them. The small remnant of provisions was reserved for the young children and the sick. It was now decided to remain in camp, while the captain with one of the elders went in search of the supply-trains. The small allowance of beef and biscuit was consumed the first day, and on the second day more cattle were killed and eaten without biscuit. On the next day there was nothing to eat, for no more cattle could be spared. Still the supplies came not, being delayed by the same storm which the emigrants had encountered. During these three days many died and numbers sickened. Some expired in the arms of those who were themselves almost at the point of death. Mothers wrapped with their dying hands the remnant of their tattered clothing around the wan forms of their perishing infants. The most pitiful sight of all was to see strong men begging for the morsel of food that had been set apart for the sick and helpless.

It was now the evening of the third day, and the sun was sinking behind the snow-clad ranges which could be traced far to the west amid the clear, frosty atmosphere of the desert. There were many who, while they gazed on this scene, did not expect to see the light of another day, and there were many who cared for life no longer, having lost all that makes life precious. They retired to their tents and commended themselves to their Maker, lay down to rest, perchance to die. But presently a shout of joy was raised. From an eminence near the western portion of the camp covered wagons were seen approaching, with the captain at their head. Immediately about half of the provisions, together with a quantity of warm clothing, blankets, and buffalo-robes were distributed to the companies. The remainder was sent forward under charge of Grant for the use of another company.

But the troubles of the hand-cart emigrants were not yet at an end. Some were already beyond all human aid, some had lost their reason, and around others the blackness of despair had settled, all efforts to rouse them from their stupor being unavailing. Each day the weather grew colder, and many were frost-bitten, losing fingers, toes, or ears, one sick man who held on to the wagon bars to avoid jolting having all his fingers frozen. At a camping-ground at Willow Creek, a tributary of the Sweetwater, fifteen people were buried, thirteen of them having been frozen to death. Near South Pass another company of the brethren met them, with supplies from Salt Lake City, and from the trees near their camp several quarters of fat beef were suspended — "a picture," says Chislett, who had charge of one of the companies, "that far surpassed the paintings of the ancient masters." From this point warm weather prevailed, and fresh teams from the valley constantly met them, distributing provisions sufficient for their needs, and then travelling eastward to meet the other company.

On reaching Salt Lake City on the 9th of November, it was found that sixty-seven out of a total of four hundred and twenty had died on the journey. Of the six hundred emigrants included in Martin's detachment, which arrived there three weeks later, a smaller percentage perished. The storm which overtook the party on the Sweetwater reached them on the North Platte. There they encamped and waited about ten days for the weather to moderate. Their rations were reduced to four ounces of flour per head a day, for a few days, until relief came. On arriving at Salt Lake City the survivors were received with the utmost kindness.

On their arrival at Devil's Gate on the Sweetwater, twenty men belonging to the other company were left in charge of stock, merchandise, and baggage, with orders to follow in the spring. The snow fell deep, and many of the cattle were devoured by the wolves, while others perished from cold. The rest were slaughtered, and on their frozen carcasses the men subsisted, their small stock of flour and salt now being exhausted. Game was scarce in the neighbourhood, and with their utmost care the supply of food could not hold out until spring. Two of the men, with the only horses that remained, were sent to Platte Bridge to obtain supplies; but the animals were lost, and they returned empty-handed. Presently the meat was all consumed, and then their only resource was the hides, which were cut into small pieces and soaked in hot water, after the hair had been removed. When the last hide had been eaten, nothing remained but their boot-tops and the scraps of leather from their wagon. Even the neck-piece of a buffalo-skin which had served as a door-mat was used for food. Thus they kept themselves alive until spring, when they subsisted on thistle-roots and wild garlic, until at length relief came from Salt Lake City.[1]

On the 5th of December, 1857, John B. Floyd, then

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[1] Bancroft.

Secretary of War, in his report to James Buchanan, President of the United States, states that the people of Utah implicitly obeyed their prophet, and that from the first day of their settlement in the territory it had been their aim to secede from the Union. He says that for years they had not even pretended obedience to Federal authority, and that they encouraged roaming bands of Indians to rob and massacre the emigrants bound for the Pacific coast.

Previous to the assembling of any troops for duty in Utah to enforce obedience to the laws of the government, an opinion was asked of General Winfield Scott, then commanding the army, as to the feasibility of sending an armed expedition into the territory. Scott's decision was most emphatically against the proposition to send troops there so late in the season. The general's advice was not heeded, however, and in May orders were promulgated that the Fifth and Tenth Infantry, the Second Dragoons, and a battery of the Fourth Artillery should assemble at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, with the Valley of the Salt Lake as their objective point.

In June, 1858, more than six thousand troops were mobilized for Utah, and the command was given to Brigadier-General W. S. Harney.

In the whole military history of the country, before the Civil War, no expedition had ever been better equipped and rationed than that which was to be called "The Army of Occupation in Utah." Thousands of cattle and immense supply-trains were started across the plains in advance. The price for the transportation was twenty-two cents a pound.

These exorbitant contracts made the lucky individuals who had secured them very wealthy. By a little political wire-pulling he who had secured the flour contract obtained permission to provide the troops with Utah flour.

It cost him but seven cents a pound, but he received the twenty-two cents which it would have cost to have transported it from the States.

This large army was stationed in Utah Territory for nearly four years. It is stated on good authority that the private soldiers asked of each other, "Why were we sent here? Why are we kept here?" while the common people wondered whether the authorities at Washington kept them there to make the contractors rich.

At that time the people of the territory were in a starving condition in consequence of the failure of crops and the unusually severe winter of 1856-1857. There were thousands who for over a year had never realized what a full meal meant; children by the hundreds "endured the gnawings of hunger until hunger had become to them a second nature"; yet despite this condition of affairs the orders issued to General Harney from Washington display a lamentable ignorance, or a determination to compel the Mormons to feed the troops on the basis of the miracle of "the loaves and fishes." His instructions were as follows: "It is not doubted that a surplus of provisions and forage, beyond the wants of the resident population, will be found in the Valley of Utah, and that the inhabitants, if assured by energy and justice, will be ready to sell them to the troops. Hence, no instructions are given you for the extreme event of the troops being in absolute need of such supplies, and their being withheld by the inhabitants. The necessities of such an occasion would furnish a law for your guidance.

Exactly the reverse of what was intended by the authorities at Washington occurred in Utah. In another chapter it is shown how the Mormons stampeded the cattle of the supply-trains, and robbed them of their contents, so it will be perceived that the Mormons themselves subsisted on the rations intended for the troops, completely controverting what was implied in the orders to General Harney.

On the day after the departure from Salt Lake of the officers[1] sent on a special mission to investigate the condition of affairs in Utah, Brigham Young issued a proclamation declaring martial law in Utah, forbidding all armed forces to enter the territory under any pretence whatever, and ordering the Mormon militia to be in readiness to march at a moment's notice. It is probable that the Nauvoo Legion, which now included the entire military force of the territory, mustered at this date from four to five thousand men.

Though imperfectly armed and equipped, and, of course, no match for regular troops, the Mormons were not to be held in contempt. In July, 1857,[2] the Nauvoo Legion had been reorganized, the two cohorts, now termed divisions, having each a nominal strength of two thousand. The division consisted of two brigades; the brigades of two regiments; the regiments of five battalions, each of a hundred men, the battalions being divided into companies of fifty, and the companies into platoons of ten. Each platoon was in charge of a lieutenant, whose duty it was carefully to inspect the arms, ammunition, and accoutrements. All able-bodied males in the territory, excepting those exempt by law, were liable to military duty, and it is probable that the Mormons could have put in the field not less than seven thousand raw troops, half disciplined, indeed, but inured to hardship, and from the very nature of their environment splendid rifle-shots.

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[1] Captain Stuart Van Vliet, U. S. A.

[2] In reciting the preparations for the impending war on the part of the Mormons, the hardships of the United States troops, and other incidents relating to the troubles in Utah Territory, the authors of this volume quote freely from Bancroft, Senate and House Documents of the Thirty-third Congress, as well as reports of the War Department.

It was not the intention of the Mormons to encounter the army of Utah in the open field, or even behind breastworks, if it could be avoided. In order to explain their tactics a despatch sent by the lieutenant-general of the Nauvoo Legion to Major Joseph Taylor will make plain what they proposed to do.

"On ascertaining the locality or route of the troops, proceed at once to annoy them in every possible way. Use every exertion to stampede their animals and set fire to their trains. Burn the whole country before them and on their flanks. Keep them from sleeping by night surprises; blockade the road by felling trees or destroying the river-fords where you can. Watch for opportunities to set fire to the grass on their windward, so as, if possible, to envelop their trains. Leave no grass before them that can be burned. Keep your men concealed as much as possible, and guard against surprises. Save life always, when it is possible; we do not wish to shed a drop of blood if it can be avoided." [1]

When General Harney had joined his command and heard of the state of affairs in Utah, he said in his characteristic bluff manner: "I am ordered there, and I will winter in the valley or in hell!" Before he reached the portals of the territory, however, his services again being demanded in Kansas, Colonel Albert Sidney Johnston, then at Fort Leavenworth, was appointed to the command of the army of Utah, and during the interim Colonel Alexander assumed command of the forces.

About the middle of August, General Wells, in command of twelve hundred and fifty men, supplied with thirty days' rations, established headquarters at Echo Cañon. Through this cañon, the Mormons supposed, lay the path of the invading army, the only means of avoiding the gorge being by a circuitous route northward to Soda Springs, and thence by way of Bear River Valley, or the Wind River Mountains. On the western side of the cañon dams and ditches were constructed, by means of which the road could be submerged to a depth of several feet. At the eastern side stone heaps were collected and bowlders loosened from the overhanging rocks, so that a slight leverage would hurl them on the passing troops, and parapets were built as a protection for sharpshooters.[1]

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[1] Taylor was captured by the United States troops about sixteen miles from Fort Bridger, and the letter of instruction found on his person.

At this juncture a letter from General Wells was delivered to Colonel Alexander, together with copies of the organic act, the law of Utah, the proclamation forbidding the entrance of armed forces into the territory, and a despatch from Brigham Young. The last was a remarkable document, and must have been somewhat of a surprise to the colonel, who had proved himself one of the most gallant soldiers of the Mexican War. He was informed that he, Brigham Young, was still governor of Utah, who ordered him to withdraw by the same route he had entered. Should he desire, however, to remain until spring in the neighbourhood of the present encampment, he must surrender his arms and ammunition to the Mormon quartermaster-general, in which case he would be supplied with provisions, and would not be molested.

Colonel Alexander replied in brief and business-like phrase. He addressed Brigham Young as governor; stated that he would submit his letter to the commanding officer immediately on his arrival; that meanwhile the troops were there by order of the President, and that their future movements and operations would depend on orders issued by competent military authority.

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[1] The remains of those dams and breastworks could be seen for many years afterward, by travellers on the trains of the Union Pacific Railroad which passed through the cañon.

In writing to brother officers en route to join their commands, Colonel Alexander said: "No information of the position or intentions of the commanding officer has reached me, and I am in utter ignorance of the object of the government in sending troops here, or the instructions given for their conduct after reaching here. I have decided on the following points: First, the necessity of a speedy move to winter quarters; second, the selection of a point for wintering; third, the best method of conducting the troops and supplies to the point selected."

A council of war was held, and the point selected was Fort Hall, on Beaver Head Mountain, one hundred and forty miles from Fort Bridger. So little did the colonel know about the disposition of the command, that at the time and place when he expected to be joined by Colonel Smith, in charge of supply-trains, that officer was still at the South Pass, with an escort of two hundred men.

On the 11th of October the troops commenced their march. Snow was falling heavily, and for several days they were compelled to cut a path for their wagons through the dense brush, their trains being still of such unwieldy length that the vanguard had reached its camping-ground at nightfall before the rear guard had moved from its camp of the preceding day. Meanwhile bands of Mormons, under their nimble and ubiquitous leaders, hung on their flanks, just out of rifle-shot, harassing them at every step, seven hundred oxen being captured and driven to Salt Lake City on the 13th!

There was as yet no cavalry in the force. A few infantry companies were mounted on mules and sent in pursuit of the guerillas, but the Saints merely laughed at them, terming them jackass cavalry.

The grass had been burned along the route, and the draught animals were so weak that they could travel only three miles a day. When the point was reached where

Smith's detachment was expected to join the army, the commander, disappointed and sorely perplexed, called a council of war, at which many of the officers were in favour of cutting their way through the cañons at all hazard.

At this juncture a despatch was received from General Johnston, who was now at South Pass, ordering the troops to proceed to Fontenelle Creek, where pasture was abundant, and a few days later a second despatch directed them to march to a point three miles below the junction of Ham and Black Forks, the colonel stating that he would join them there. On the 3d of November they reached the place of rendezvous, where Johnston arrived the following day, with a reënforcement of cavalry and the supply-trains in charge of Smith.

Albert Sidney Johnston was a favourite officer, and had already given earnest of the qualities that he displayed a few years later in the campaigns of the Civil War, on the Confederate side. The morale of the army was at once restored, and each man put forth his utmost energy at the touch of this excellent soldier. But their troubles were not yet ended. The expedition was now ordered to Fort Bridger, and at every step difficulties increased. There were only thirty-five miles to be travelled, but excepting on the margin of a few slender streams the country through which their route lay was the barest of desert land. There was no shelter from the chill blasts of this mountain solitude, where, even in November, the thermometer sometimes sank to sixteen degrees below zero. There was no fuel but the wild sage and willow; there was little pasture for the half-frozen cattle.

The march continued on the 6th of November, and on the previous night five hundred of the strongest oxen had been stolen by the Mormons. The train extended over six miles, and all day long snow and sleet fell on the retreating column. Some of the men were frost-bitten, and the exhausted animals were goaded by their drivers until many fell dead in their traces. At sunset the troops encamped wherever they could find a particle of shelter, some under bluffs, and some in the willow copses. At daybreak the camp was surrounded by the carcasses of frozen cattle. Several hundred beasts had perished during the night. Still, as the trains arrived from the rear, each one halted for a day or more, giving time for the cattle to rest and graze on such scant herbage as they could find. To press forward rapidly was impossible, for it would have cost the lives of most of the draught animals; to find shelter was equally impossible, for there was none. There was no alternative but to proceed slowly and persistently, saving as many as possible of the horses, mules, and oxen. Fifteen days were required for this difficult operation.

Meanwhile Colonel Philip St. George Cooke, who arrived on the 19th by way of Fort Laramie, at the head of five hundred dragoons, had fared no better than the main body, having lost nearly half of his cattle.

On the 5th the command of Colonel Cooke passed the Devil's Gate. While crossing what he calls a four-mile hill, he writes as follows: —

"The north wind and drifting snow became severe; the air seemed turned to frozen fog; nothing could be seen; we were struggling in a freezing cloud. The lofty wall at Three Crossings was a happy relief; but the guide, who had lately passed there, was relentless in pronouncing that there was no grass. As he promised grass and shelter two miles farther, we marched on, crossing twice more the rocky stream, half choked with snow and ice; finally he led us behind a great granite rock, but all too small for the promised shelter. Only a part of the regiment could huddle up there in the deep snow; whilst the long night through the storm continued, and in fearful eddies from above, before, behind, drove the falling and drifting snow."

Meanwhile the animals were driven once more across the stream to the base of a granite ridge which faced the storm, but where there was no grass. They refused to eat, the mules huddling together and moaning piteously, while some of the horses broke away from the guard and went back to the ford. The next day better camping-ground was reached ten miles farther on. On the morning of the 8th the thermometer marked forty-four degrees below freezing point; but in this weather and through deep snow the men made eighteen miles, and the following day nineteen miles, to the next camping-grounds on Bitter Creek, and in the valley of Sweetwater. On the 10th matters were still worse. Herders left to bring up the rear with stray mules could not force them from the valley, and there three-fourths of them were left to perish. Nine horses were also abandoned. At night the thermometer marked twenty-five degrees below zero; nearly all the tent-pins were broken, and nearly forty soldiers and teamsters were on the sick list, most of them being frost-bitten. "The earth," writes the colonel, "has no more lifeless, treeless, grassless desert; it contains scarcely a wolf to glut itself on the hundreds of dead and frozen animals which for thirty miles nearly block the road."

At length the army arrived at Fort Bridger — to find that the buildings in and around it, together with those at Fort Supply, twelve miles distant, had been burnt to the ground by Mormons, and the grain and other provisions removed or destroyed. All that remained were two enclosures surrounded by walls of cobblestone cemented with mortar, the larger one being a hundred feet square. This was appropriated for supplies, while on the smaller one lunettes were built and mounted with cannon. A sufficient garrison was stationed at this point; the cattle were sent for the winter to Henry Fork in charge of Colonel Cooke and six companies of the Second Dragoons, and about the end of November the remainder of the troops went into winter quarters on Black Fork of the Green River, two or three miles beyond Fort Bridger, and a hundred and fifteen from Salt Lake City. The site, to which was given the name of Fort Scott, was sheltered by bluffs rising abruptly at a few hundred yards from the bed of the stream. Near by were clumps of cottonwood which the Mormons had attempted to burn; but the wood being green and damp, the fire had merely scorched the bark.

Though most of the beef cattle had been carried off by the Mormons or Indians, a sufficient number of draught animals remained to furnish meat for seven months during six days of the week, while of bacon there was enough for one day in the week, and by reducing the ration of flour, coffee, and other articles, they might also be made to last until the first of June. Parties were at once sent to Oregon and New Mexico to procure cattle and remounts for the cavalry. Meantime shambles were built, to which the starved animals at Fort Henry were driven, and butchered as soon as they had gathered a little flesh, their meat being jerked and stored for future use.

There was not an ounce of salt in the entire camp; a supply was proffered as a gift from Brigham Young, whom Johnston now termed, "The great Mormon rebel," which was rejected with contempt. Salt was secretly brought into the camp, but the commander would eat none of it, and the officer's mess was soon after supplied by the Indians at the rate of five dollars a pound!

Thus did the army of Utah pass the winter of 1857–1858, amid privations no less severe than those endured at Valley Forge eighty-one years before.

But meanwhile events occurred which promised a peaceful solution of the difficulty. The spirited resistance of the Saints had called forth unfavourable comments on Buchanan's policy throughout the United States and Europe. He had virtually made war upon the territory before any declaration had been issued; he had sent forward an army before the causes of offence had been fairly investigated; and now, at this critical juncture in the nation's history when there was a possibility of the disruption of the Union, he was about to lock up in a distant and almost inaccessible region more than one-third of the nation's war material, and nearly all of its best troops. Even the soldiers themselves, though in a cheerful mood and in excellent condition, had no heart for the approaching campaign, accepting, as they did, the commonly received opinion that it was merely a move on the President's political chess-board. In a word, Buchanan and the Washington politicians and the Johnston-Harney army must confess themselves hopelessly beaten, before a blow was struck. The army was powerless before the people they had come to punish. All that remained to do was to forgive the Mormons and let them go.

Through the pressure brought to bear, the President was induced to stop the threatened war. On the 6th of April he signed a proclamation promising amnesty to all who returned to their allegiance; and on the 26th of June, 1858, the army of Utah entered the Valley of the Great Salt Lake.

Thus ended this farcical demonstration on the part of the government — a war without a battle! There was, perhaps, no genuine basis of necessity upon which to organize the expensive and disastrous expedition against the Mormons. The real cause, perhaps, should be attributed to the clamour of other religious sects against what they held to be an unorthodox belief.

The City of Salt Lake, the capital of the Mormon settlement, was founded upon the arrival of that sect in the valley in 1847. It is situated in latitude 40 degrees 46 minutes north, and longitude 112 degrees 6 minutes west, (from Greenwich), at the foot of the western slope of the Wahsatch Mountains, an extensive chain of lofty hills, forming a portion of the eastern boundary of what is known in our geography as the Great Basin.

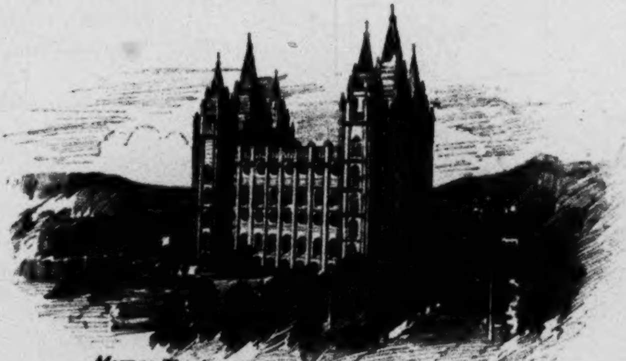
The growth of this delightful mountain city in its arid, desolate environment is a monument to the patience, industry, and devotion to a principle which has few parallels.

The corporate limits aggregate about fifty square miles; no city in the world, perhaps, possesses streets of such an extraordinary width. Through their whole vast length the magnificent trees which fringe them are irrigated by streams of pure water flowing from the several cañons in the vicinity. By this constant passage of these mountain streams, the air is deliciously cooled, and Salt Lake City made one of the most beautiful and charming places on the North American continent.

It is declared by the faithful that Brigham Young affirmed it was in a vision that the place was designated to him by an angel from heaven as the exact spot where the capital of Zion should be built.

By the requirements of an original ordinance each residence was to be located twenty feet in the rear of the lot, the intervening space forming a little park filled with flowers, trees, and shrubbery. By the same system of irrigation which flows through the streets to nourish the trees, the water runs into every garden spot, and produces a beauty of verdure in what was once the most barren of wastes.

Even in its infancy, Salt Lake City was the only charming spot between the Missouri River and the Pacific Ocean, for in the early days of the hazardous passage across the plains, the whole region with rare exceptions was conspicuous for the entire absence of trees. There was one monotonous blaze of sunshine, day after day, as the caravans and overland coaches plodded through the alkali dust of the desert. The weary traveller gazed upon nothing but seemingly interminable prairies and naked elevations, destitute of verdure, or as he entered the rock-ribbed Continental Divide, only rugged mountains relieved the eternal sameness of his surroundings. Salt Lake City, nestling in its wealth of trees and flowers, was a second "Diamond of the Desert." In its welcome shade, the dusty traveller, like the solitary Sir Kenneth, reposed his jaded limbs and dreamed of the babbling brooks and waving woodlands he had left a thousand miles behind him.



Mormon Temple
Salt Lake City

The temple and the tabernacle, of purely Mormon conception, are the most elaborate and attractive architectural structures in the city.

It is claimed by the faithful that the site of the temple was announced by Brigham Young to his people on an evening in July, 1847, a very short time after the arrival of the Mormon pioneers. The story runs that while roaming in company with some of his apostles, about the region of the camp, discussing and declaring that where they had halted was the very place on which to rear the new Zion, the prophet stuck his cane in the ground and said to those who were with him, "Here is where the temple of our God shall rise."

Of course there was no appeal from his dictum, and from the moment of his declaration that spot was regarded as sacred by all the people, who firmly believed that when their leader spoke it was through inspiration from heaven.

CHAPTER VII

MOUNTAIN MEADOWS MASSACRE — INDIANS ATTACK THE WAGONS — LEE OFFERS PROTECTION — AMBUSHED BY LEE — LEE FLIES TO THE MOUNTAINS — MORMON CHURCH ACQUITTED — EXECUTION OF JOHN D. LEE — TEMPORARY TOLL-BRIDGES — INDIAN RAIDS ON CATTLE RANCHES — STUTTERING BROWN — GRAVES ALONG THE TRAIL

John D. Lee.

THE most terrible fate that ever befell a caravan on the Old Trail was that known to history as the Mountain Meadows Massacre.

The story of this damnable, outrageous, and wholesale murder is as follows: —

In the spring of 1857 a band of emigrants numbering one hundred and thirty-six, from Missouri and Arkansas, set out for Southern California. The party had about six hundred head of cattle, thirty wagons, and thirty horses and mules. At least thirty thousand dollars worth of plunder was collected by the assassins after the massacre.

Owing to the impending war between the United States and the Mormons, the Saints had been ordered not to furnish any emigrant trains with supplies. In view of this fact the leaders of the train found it difficult to get provisions for the party after reaching the territory occupied by that sect. The party reached Salt Lake and camped about the end of July, but finding the Mormons in so unfriendly a mood, decided to break camp and move on. Continuing their journey, they proceeded to Beaver City, thence to Parowan, where they obtained a scanty supply of provisions.

Arriving at Cedar City, they succeeded in purchasing about fifty bushels of wheat, which was ground at a mill belonging to John D. Lee, formerly commander of the fort at Cedar, but then Indian agent, and in charge of an Indian farm near Harmony.

About thirty miles to the southwest of Cedar are the Mountain Meadows, which form the divide between the waters of the Great Basin and those which flow into the Colorado. At the south end of the Meadows, which are four to five miles in length and one in width, but here run to a narrow point, is a large stream, the banks of which are about ten feet in height. Close to this stream the emigrants were encamped on the 5th of September, almost midway between two ranges of low hills some four hundred yards apart.

It was Saturday evening when the trains encamped at Mountain Meadows. On the Sabbath they rested, and at the usual hour one of them conducted divine service as had been their custom throughout the journey.

At dawn on the following morning while the camp-fires were being lighted, they were fired upon by Indians, or white men disguised as savages, and more than twenty were killed or wounded, their cattle having been driven off by the assailants who had crept on them under cover of darkness. The men now ran for their wagons, pushed them together so as to form a corral, and dug out the earth deep enough to sink them to the hubs; then in the centre of the enclosure they made a rifle-pit large enough to contain the entire company. Thereupon the attacking party, which numbered from three to four hundred, withdrew to the hills, on the crest of which they built parapets, whence they shot down all who showed themselves outside the intrenchment.

The emigrants were now in a state of siege, and had little hope of escape as all the outlets of the valley were guarded. Their ammunition was almost exhausted, many of their number were wounded, and their sufferings from thirst had become intolerable. Down in the ravine and within a few yards of the corral was the stream of water, but only after sundown could any of the precious liquid be obtained, and then at great risk, for this point was covered by the muskets of the Indians, who lurked all night among the ravines waiting for their victims.

On the morning of the fifth day of the siege, a wagon was seen approaching, accompanied by an escort of Mormon soldiers. When near the intrenchment the company halted, and one of them, William Bateman by name, was sent forward with a flag of truce. In answer to this signal a little girl, dressed in white, appeared in an open space between the wagons. Half-way between the Mormons and the corral, Bateman was met by one of the emigrants named Hamilton, to whom he promised protection for his party on condition that their arms were surrendered, assuring him that they would be conducted safely to Cedar City. After a brief interview each returned to his comrades.

It was arranged that John D. Lee should conclude terms with the emigrants, and he immediately went into their camp. Bidding the men pile their arms into the wagon, to avoid provoking the Indians, he placed in them the wounded, the small children, and a little clothing. While thus engaged, a man rode up with orders from

Major Higbee, an officer of the Mormon army, to hasten, as the Indians threatened to renew the attack.

The emigrants were then hurried away, the men and women following the wagons, the latter in front. All were in single file, and on each side of them the militia were drawn up two deep, with twenty paces between their lines. Within two hundred yards of the camp, the men were halted until the women approached a copse of scrub-oak, about a mile distant, and near which, it appears, the Indians were in ambush.

The men now resumed their march, the militia forming in single file, each one walking by the side of an emigrant, and carrying his musket on the left arm. As soon as the women were close to the ambuscade, Higbee, who was in charge of the detachment, gave a signal, which had evidently been prearranged, by saying to his command, "Do your duty"; and the horrible butchery commenced. Most of the men were shot down at the first fire. Three only escaped from the valley; of these, two were quickly run down and slaughtered; the third was slain at Muddy Creek, some fifty miles distant.

The women and those of the children who were on foot ran forward some two or three hundred yards, when they were overtaken by Indians, among whom were some Mormons in disguise. The women fell on their knees, and with clasped hands sued in vain for mercy, clutching the garments of their murderers. Children pleaded for life, but the steady gaze of innocent childhood was met by the demoniac grin of the savages, who brandished over them uplifted knives and tomahawks. Their skulls were battered in, or their throats cut from ear to ear, and, while still alive, the scalp was torn from their heads. Some of the little ones met with a more merciful death, one, an infant in arms, being shot through the head by the same bullet that pierced its father's heart. Of the women none were spared, and of the children only those who were not more than seven years of age.

To two of Lee's wagoners was assigned the duty, so called, of slaughtering the sick and wounded. Obeying their instructions, they stopped their teams and despatched their unfortunate victims. Some were shot; others had their throats cut.

The massacre was now completed, and after stripping the bodies of all articles of value, Brother Lee and his associates went to breakfast, returning after a hearty meal to bury their dead.

It was a ghastly sight that met their eyes on their return, and one that caused even the assassins to shudder and turn pale. The bodies had been entirely denuded by the Indians. Some of the corpses were horribly mangled and nearly all of them scalped. The dead were piled in heaps in a ravine near by and a little earth thrown over them. This was washed off by the first rains, leaving the remains to be devoured by wolves and coyotes.

It was not until two years after the massacre that they were decently interred, by a detachment of United States troops sent for that purpose from Camp Floyd.

On arriving at Mountain Meadows, the soldiers found skulls and bones scattered for the space of a mile around the ravine, where they had been dragged by the wolves. Nearly all of the bodies had been gnawed by those ghouls of the desert, so that few could be recognized, as their dismembered skeletons were bleached by the sun. Many of the skulls had been crushed by the butts of muskets, or cloven with tomahawks; others were shattered by firearms discharged close to the head.

A few remnants of apparel, torn from the backs of women and children as they ran from their merciless pursuers, still fluttered among the bushes, and near by were masses of human hair, matted and trodden in the earth.

Over the last resting-place of the victims was erected a cone-shaped cairn, twelve feet high. Against its northern base was a slab of rough granite with the following inscription: "Here 120 men, women, and children were massacred in cold blood, early in September, 1857. They were from Arkansas." Surmounting the cairn was a cross of cedar, inscribed with the words: "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."

The survivors of the awful slaughter were seventeen children, from two months to seven years of age, who were carried, on the evening of the massacre, by John D. Lee and others to the house of Jacob Hamblin, and afterward placed in charge of Mormon families at various points in the territory. All of them were recovered in the summer of 1858, with the exception of one, who was rescued a few months later, and though thinly clad, they bore no marks of ill-usage. In 1859 they were conveyed to Arkansas, the Congress of the United States having appropriated ten thousand dollars for their rescue and restoration to relatives.

Those concerned in the massacre had pledged themselves by the most solemn oaths to stand by each other, and ever to insist that the deed was done entirely by Indians. For several months this was the accepted theory, but when it became known that some of the children had been spared, suspicion at once pointed elsewhere, for among all the murders committed by the Utes, there was not a single instance of their having shown any such mercy. Moreover, it was ascertained that an armed party of Mormons had left Cedar City, and had returned with spoil, and that the savages complained of having been unfairly treated in the division of the booty.

It is claimed that when John D. Lee discovered that the United States authorities suspected him as being the principal actor in the awful tragedy, he left the valley of the Great Salt Lake, and hid himself in one of the cañons of the Colorado,[1] where he remained for years suffering that terrible anxiety which comes to all fugitives from justice, sooner or later, and which is said by those who have experienced it to be absolutely unbearable.

In 1874, under the provisions of what is legally known as the "Poland Bill," whereby the better administration of justice was subserved, the Grand Jury was instructed to investigate the Mountain Meadows Massacre, and find bills of indictment against John D. Lee, William H. Dame, Isaac C. Haight, and others. Warrants were issued for their arrest, and after a vigorous search Lee and Dame were captured, Lee having been discovered in a hog-pen at a small settlement on the Sevier River.

On the 23d of July, 1875, the trial was begun, at Beaver City, in Southern Utah. Much delay ensued, however, by the absence of witnesses, and by the fact that Lee had promised to make a full confession, and turn state's evidence. His statement was not accepted by the court, and the case was brought to trial on the 23d of July, with the expected result, that the jury, eight of whom were Mormons, failed to agree.

Lee was then tried a second time, and it was proved that the Mormon Church had nothing to do with the massacre; that Lee, in fact, had acted in direct opposition to the officers of the Church. It was shown that he was a villain and a murderer of the deepest dye; that with his own hands, after inducing the emigrants to surrender and give up their arms, he had shot two women and brained a third with the butt-end of his musket, and had cut the throat of a wounded man whom he had dragged from one of the wagons; that he had gathered the property of the emigrants and disposed of it for his own benefit. It was further proved that Lee shot two or three of the wounded, and that when two girls, who had been hiding in the brush, were brought into his presence by an Indian after the massacre, the latter asked what was to be done with them, to which Lee replied, "They are too old to be spared." "They are too pretty to be killed," answered the chief. "Such are my orders," said Lee, whereupon the Indian shot one, and Lee, dragging the other to the ground, cut her throat.

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[1] He took refuge in the Grand Cañon of the Colorado River; his hiding-place was three miles from any possible pass, and he kept a faithful adherent constantly on guard. When any one was seen approaching the pass, Lee was immediately signalled and forthwith repaired to a cave, where he remained until it was discovered whether the intruder was friend or foe. If not a friend, he kept to his cave until the party had left, then returned to his house. Lee followed this life for five or six years, until he became so weary of dodging, and running from supposed enemies, that he finally returned to Salt Lake City. I saw his cave and house some years ago when, in company with General N. A. Miles and others, I made a pleasure trip to the Grand Cañon. — W. F. CODY.

Lee was convicted of murder in the first degree, and, having been allowed to select his own method of execution, was sentenced to be shot. The case was appealed to the supreme court of the territory, but the judgment was sustained, and it was ordered that the sentence be carried into effect on the 23d of March, 1877. The others who had been tried were discharged from custody.

A short time before his execution Lee made a confession in which he attempted to palliate his guilt by throwing the burden of the crime on his accomplices, especially on Haight and Higbee, and to show that the massacre was committed by order of Brigham Young and the High Council, all of which was absolutely false.

On the 13th of March he wrote: "I feel as composed and as calm as a summer morning. I hope to meet my fate with manly courage. I declare my innocence. I have done nothing designedly wrong in that unfortunate and lamentable affair with which I have been implicated.

I used my utmost endeavours to save them from their sad fate. I freely would have given worlds, were they at my command, to have averted that evil. Death to me has no terror. It is but a struggle, and all is over. I know that I have a reward in heaven, and my conscience does not accuse me."

Ten days later he was led to execution at the Mountain Meadows. Over that spot the curse of the Almighty seemed to have fallen. The luxuriant herbage that had clothed it twenty years before had disappeared; the springs were dry and wasted, and now there was neither grass nor any green thing, save here and there a copse of sage-brush or scrub-oak, that served but to make its desolation still more desolate. It is said that the phantoms of the murdered emigrants still flit around the cairn that marks their grave, and nightly reënact in ghastly pantomime the scene of this hideous tragedy.

About ten o'clock on the morning of the 23d a party of armed men, alighting from their wagons, approached the site of the massacre. Among them were the United States marshal, William Nelson, the district attorney, a military guard, and a score of private citizens. In their midst was John Doyle Lee. Blankets were placed over the wheels of one of the wagons, to serve as a screen for the firing party. Some rough boards were then nailed together in the shape of a coffin, which was placed near the edge of the cairn, and upon it Lee took his seat until the preparations were completed. The marshal now read the order of the court, and, turning to the prisoner, said, "Mr. Lee, if you have anything to say before the order of the court is carried into effect you can do so now."

Rising from his coffin, he looked calmly around for a moment, and then with unfaltering voice repeated the statements already quoted from his confession. "I have but little to say this morning," he added. "It seems I have to be made a victim; a victim must be had, and I am the victim. I studied to make Brigham Young's will my pleasure for thirty years. See now what I have come to this day! I have been sacrificed in a cowardly, dastardly manner. I cannot help it; it is my last word; it is so. I do not fear death; I shall never go to a worse place than I am now in. I ask the Lord my God, if my labours are done, to receive my spirit."

A Methodist clergyman, who acted as his spiritual adviser, then knelt by his side and offered a brief prayer, to which he listened attentively. After shaking hands with those around him, he removed a part of his clothing, handing his hat to the marshal, who bound a handkerchief over his eyes, his hands being free at his own request. Seating himself with his face to the firing party, and with hands clasped over his head, he exclaimed: "Let them shoot the balls through my heart. Don't let them mangle my body."

The word of command was given, the report of the rifles rang forth on the still morning air, and without a groan or quiver the body of the criminal fell back lifeless on his coffin.

God was more merciful to him than he had been to his victims.[1]

Once one of Russell, Majors, & Waddell's trains, upon arriving at the Little Blue River below Kearney, en route to Fort Laramie, had a little skirmish with the Sioux. One of the party, who was going to the Fort to erect a sawmill for the government,[2] tells about it as follows: —

"I had travelled ahead of the train a mile or more, had gotten off my mule, laid down awhile, and I believe fell asleep. On awaking I saw three Indians coming out of the brush on the creek bottom; I took a glance at them, and quietly stood where I was. After a while they approached me; I mounted my mule and held my loaded shot-gun before me across the saddle, with my finger on the trigger. Two formed themselves in front of me and one behind. I paid no special attention to them, but they immediately began to make signs in relation to swapping their horses for my mule. I merely pointed to the U. S. on the shoulder of the animal, indicating that it was not my property. They quickly saw they couldn't scare me, though I didn't know but what they were making up their minds to kill me; finally, however, without any further demonstration they rode off one at a time, and left me, where I remained until my train came up.

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[1] See Bancroft's *Pacific States.*

[2] Washington E. Hinman.

"When we made camp that afternoon a good-sized band of Cheyennes and Arapahoes gathered around with their usual salutations of 'How? How?' I suggested to the wagon-master to boil some old coffee-grounds after we had eaten our dinner, and with some sugar and crackers or something of that character, give them to the Indians, which was done. In the afternoon we moved out on the road toward Kearney and ahead of us was a train going unloaded to the same place. As we strung out on the trail I noticed that the chief of the band, I think he was known as 'Hairy Bear' of the

Cheyennes, and all of his warriors were riding along, one opposite nearly every driver. I told the wagon-master that he had better stop the train and tell the Indians they must take either one end of the road or the other, as it was evident they were getting ready for a row. Upon discovering that we were 'up to' their little job, they went ahead.

"At dark, after we had encamped again, the assistant wagon-master of the train in front came to us and told of a little scrap he had with these same Indians. One of them at first undertook to snatch the handkerchief off his neck; another Indian had shot two or three arrows after a teamster, then they rode off.

"Our train went on five miles, where we were going to camp, when a messenger was sent by the commanding officer at the fort suggesting that the two caravans camp together, which we did. In the morning, when we started out, I rode ahead on my mule as usual, and when I had got about half-way to the fort I saw the white shoulder-blade of a buffalo setting up on end about fifty yards from the road. I rode out and picked it up; it was standing on end with a little wisp of grass wrapped around it; on the face of it were three men painted red. The broad end of the blade in the ground was marked out like a fort, with little black spots, meaning tracks of soldiers, and a man in black was there with his rifle drawn, and resting across one of the red men's necks. Another was shot below the shoulder-joint, and one had his arm broken. Painted in red, right up toward the joint, was a wolf trotting from it. This indicated that the Indians had had a fight; three of them had been wounded, one in the back, one in the neck, and one had his arm broken. There were also three spears, the points of which were stuck in the ground, indicating that three Indians were dead and had no more use for the weapons.

"I took the bone to the fort and there the interpreter told what it all meant. I discovered it to be a valuable history of what was going on: the Cheyennes and Arapahoes who had been with us had separated; the Arapahoes had gone away and tried to steal some ponies; they would be along pretty soon. All this occurred after the Arapahoes had separated from the Cheyennes. The latter had placed the shoulder-blade of the buffalo on the trail, to prevent their making the mistake of going to the fort, where, after their trouble with the train, the soldiers would make it hot for them; but as I had found their message first, their plan was frustrated.

"Later on the Indians came to the fort, and one of the teamsters who had been wounded happened to be there, and he picked out the very Indian who had shot him. The commanding officer directed the sergeant of the guard to arrest the savage, which he did, and proceeded to put him in irons. While fastening on a ball and chain, the Indian struck the soldier on the head who was holding him. Upon this the commanding officer told one of the guards to shoot him, which the man did very promptly. The bullet went clear through the Indian, and shot one of the interpreter's fingers off. After this little incident, there was a general free-for-all fight, in which the Indians were badly worsted. After this battle the Indians went south and were not troublesome for some time."

When the snow began to melt from the mountain peaks in the spring the little insignificant creeks swelled up and for a few weeks were transformed into raging torrents, too deep or too dangerous to ford. At such seasons the few ranchmen who were in the country built temporary bridges across them, hardly ever exceeding fifty feet in length. While the streams were high, these bridges were a veritable gold-mine from the revenue paid by the freighters as toll. In order, however, to make their toll lawful, every bridge-owner was required to possess himself of a charter from the secretary of the territory, and approved by the governor. This official document simply authorized the proprietor to charge such toll as he saw fit, which was always extravagantly high, — usually five dollars for each team of six yoke of cattle and wagon. These ranchmen also kept an assortment of groceries and barrels of whiskey, for the latter of which the teamsters were always liberal customers.

It very often happened, through ignorance of the law or from ignoring it, that these ranchmen took out no charter, because its possession was so rarely questioned.

At the trail-crossing of Rock Creek was one of these frontier toll-bridges. In the spring of 1866 two trains were travelling in company, one in charge of a man known as Stuttering Brown, because of an impediment in his speech. He was a man of undoubted courage, and determined. When angry, he indulged in some of the quaintest and wittiest original expressions imaginable; but if you laughed at him, he became very much offended, as he was particularly sensitive about the impediment of his speech. Still, he was a man who appreciated a joke, and enjoyed it even if it was upon himself.

Brown's train comprised twenty teams, and the other twenty-six. His train happened to be in the lead that day, and as they neared the bridge, Brown rode back to the other wagon-master and said: —

"B-B-Billy, wh-what are you g-g-going to do about p-p-paying t-t-toll on this b-b-bridge?"

He answered that if the fellow had a charter, he would be compelled to pay; otherwise he would not, as probably the charges were exorbitant. Brown argued they might have some trouble with the ranchman if pay was refused, as they generally had a pretty tough crowd around them who were ready for any kind of a skirmish.

His friend called attention to the fact that together they had fifty-five men, well armed on account of probable Indian troubles. They were all good fighters, and they would ask for no greater fun than cleaning out the ranch, if it was discovered that the proprietor had no charter.

Brown returned to the bridge, where the ranchman stood preparing to collect his toll, which was five dollars a team in advance. This would require one hundred dollars from Brown and a hundred and thirty from the other train. Brown refused point blank to pay the bill, and the ranchman asked him upon what grounds.

Brown's reply was: —

"Y-Y-You h-h-haint g-g-got no ch-ch-charter." The ranchman answered him that he had, and if he would go back to the ranch with him, he would show it. The ranch was only a few hundred yards away.

Brown accompanied him, and in a short time returned to the train. His friend asked him if the charter was all right, to which Brown replied in the affirmative, saying that he had settled for his outfit, and that his friend had better do the same, which he accordingly did.

After crossing the bridge, the other wagon-master noticed that Brown was very much amused about something, occasionally indulging in loud bursts of laughter. His friend inquired the cause of his mirth, but he refused to tell.

When they arrived at the camping-ground that evening, and after corralling the trains and placing out the proper guards, Brown invited his friend to take supper with him. While eating he was asked what had so amused him during the afternoon. He said that when he went up to the ranch to see the bridge charter, he rode to the door, sat on his mule, and asked the ranchman to trot out his charter and be d—d quick about it.

The man went into a back room and pretty soon returned, shouting :—

"You stuttering thief, here it is! What do you think about it?"

Brown looked up and found that he was peering into the muzzle of a double-barrelled gun, probably loaded with buck-shot. The ranchman was pointing it directly at his head, with both triggers cocked. Brown saw he was in earnest, and asked if that was the charter. The ranchman replied that it was.

His friend then asked, "What did you do, Brown?"

"N-N-Not much. J-J-Just t-t-told him, th-th-that's good, and settled."

Some years afterward, when Brown was part owner and superintendent of the Black Hills stage-line, he was waylaid and killed by the Indians, while on a return trip from Custer City. Thus ended the career of one of the bravest and best of the men on the frontier.

One of the most famous of temporary toll-ferries was over the trail-crossing of Green River. It was owned by Bill Hickman, a Mormon, and as the river was seldom fordable he reaped a rich harvest of gold from the emigrant trains. His prices for crossing teams depended upon the ability of their owners to pay, varying from five to twenty dollars each. The old ford may still be seen just below the station of Green River on the Union Pacific Railroad.

During the preparation for the Mormon war the supply-trains of the government were constantly harassed by that people. The genius of campaigning by destroying trains was Major Lot Smith. One evening, at the head of forty men, after riding all night, he came in sight of a westward-bound government train. On coming up to it he ordered the drivers to turn round and go back on their trail. They obeyed promptly, but as soon as Smith was out of sight, they wheeled around and travelled west again. During the day a party of Mormon troops passed them, and taking all of the freight out of the wagons, left them standing there.

Smith was afterward informed by his scouts that a caravan of twenty-six wagons was approaching. Upon this information he halted his men and, after eating, started again at dusk, approached the train while it was in camp at a place near Simpson's Hollow, and ambushed his party for several hours. Meanwhile, he learned that there were two trains, each of twenty-six wagons; but in fact as was afterward discovered there were really three of seventy-five wagons in all.

About midnight, while only a few of the teamsters were gathered around their camp-fire, some of them drinking, some smoking, they suddenly saw what seemed to be an endless procession of armed and mounted men emerge from the darkness.

Smith, quietly coming up, asked for the captain of the outfit, whose name was Dawson. As a majority of the teamsters were asleep, their guns fastened to the covers of the wagons, and any resistance almost hopeless, Dawson stepped forward, surrendered, and told his men to stack their arms and group themselves on a spot designated by Smith. Smith dealt successively with the other trains in like manner. Then, after lighting two torches, he handed one of them to a Gentile in his party, known as Big James, remarking at the same time, "It is eminently proper for a Gentile to spoil a Gentile."

Riding from wagon to wagon, Smith's men set fire to the covers, which rapidly caught in the crisp mountain air, and were soon all ablaze. Dawson, meanwhile, was ordered by Smith to the rear of the trains to take out provisions for his captors, and when everything was fairly burning he and his party rode away, first informing his panic-stricken captives that he would return as soon as he had delivered the provisions to his comrades near by, and instantly shoot any one who should make any attempt to extinguish the flames.

The destruction of these supply-trains was a severe blow to the army of occupation ; both troops and animals suffered severely in consequence of the loss of provisions.

The year 1865 was fruitful of Indian depredations along the Old Trail, particularly that portion which ran through the Platte Valley. The Sioux and Cheyennes allied themselves in large bands against the whites, and raided the beautiful region from one end to the other. Theirs was a trail of blood like that of Attila, "The Scourge," and their fiendish acts rivalled those of that monster of the Old World.

On the south side of the Platte River, about a hundred and twenty-five miles from Denver, were located, successively, three ranches, known as the Wisconsin, the American, and Godfrey's.

On the morning of the 19th of January, of the year above mentioned, a company of cavalry, marching from Denver, passed along by the Wisconsin Ranch a little before nine o'clock. As the Indians were on the war-path, and upon request of the proprietor, the captain of the company promised to send back ten men of his troop, to help defend the property, as they were going to their station a few miles east of there.

The cavalry had hardly disappeared from view across the divide when the savages began their attack. The captain of the cavalry, hearing the continuous firing, immediately returned with his command, and at once a fierce battle took place a short distance from the ranch. The troops retreated and went into camp at Valley Station.

There were seven white persons living on the ranch at that time: Mr. Mark M. Coad, P. B. Danielson, his wife and two children, besides two hired men. They fought the Indians until five o'clock in the afternoon without any outside assistance, and had killed several. About noon the savages set fire to the haystack and stable, which caused a dense smoke to settle over the house in which the besieged were sheltered.

As the fight progressed, the Indians seemed determined to have the building at any hazard; so they cut a large amount of wood and piled it against the back door, with the intention of burning it down so as to gain an entrance. The door was blockaded with sacks of grain, to prevent the bullets from coming into the room, and while the savages were placing the wood on the outside, the men quietly removed the sacks of grain. When the besiegers were ready to kindle the fire, the door was swung open, and Mr. Coad, springing to the opening as it swung back, killed three of the Indians, and wounded several more with his two pistols, then jumped back and the door was closed.

The daring act was performed so quickly that the savages were instantly demoralized. They dared not return the shots for fear of killing some of their own party who were attempting to enter the house.

After the door was again closed the Indians regained their senses, and a perfect shower of bullets rained against the house. The savages, now discouraged from the suddenness and effect of Mr. Coad's attack, and the loss of so many of their number, retreated to their camp and hostilities ceased for the time.

While this battle was in progress at the Wisconsin ranch, another fight was going on at the American ranch, twelve miles east. This ranch was occupied by the Messrs. Morrissey, one of whom had his wife, two children, and six or eight hired men.

It was subsequently shown that the men must have fought very desperately, as they were found locked arm in arm with the savages, holding their pistols or knives in their hands. The ranch was looted of its valuables and burned. The whites were all killed, excepting Mrs. Morrissey and her two children, who were taken prisoners and carried off by the Indians, but shortly afterward were surrendered to the government. Early in the morning of the same day the Indians attacked the Godfrey ranch. There were living there Mr. Godfrey, better known as Old Ricket; his wife; his daughter, a girl of fourteen years; and two other white men.

They fought the savages for several hours, and finally, seeing that they stood no chance of capturing the place, the Indians determined to burn it; so they set fire to the haystack which stood near the building. After the Indians had lighted the stack, Mr. Godfrey's little daughter rushed out of the door with a bucket of water, extinguished the flames, and returned safely into the house, notwithstanding the shower of bullets and arrows that rained all around her.

The Indians just then, somehow learning that the American ranch had been taken, and there was a chance for them in the division of the spoils, withdrew all their force and went down there.

From there they went on to the Wisconsin ranch, which had not been captured, for the purpose of reënforcing the besieging party at that place. The besieged had succeeded in sending a messenger during the day to the commanding officer of the troops at Valley Station, asking for assistance to enable them to get away from the ranch, well knowing that the savages would return in the morning with reënforcements. The captain sent up a detachment of fifteen men, and escorted the people of the ranch down to the Station. The next morning Mr. Coad, with a detachment of troops as escort, and several wagons, started for the purpose of taking away the goods to a place of safety. When approaching the ranch they found it in the possession of the Indians; and the troops, seeing the strength of the savage force, knew that it would be worse than useless to attempt to drive them away; so they returned to the Station. Thus three of the finest ranches on the trail at that time were destroyed.

One of the most disastrous and effectual raids by the savages during the year 1865 was the burning and sacking of Julesburg, which was within rifle-shot of Fort Sedgwick, on the South Platte River, in what is now Weld County, Colorado.

There the government established a military reservation, comprising sixty-four square miles, in the exact centre of which the fort was located. The reservation extended across the river, and included the mouth of Pole Creek, a small tributary of the Platte, which debouches into it from the north.

The original Julesburg, at that time,[1] was a mere hamlet of crude frame buildings, and but for the proximity of Fort Sedgwick it would have been destroyed long before it was.

On the morning of the 2d of February, the men at the stage station, called Julesburg, discovered a small band of Indians in the valley to the east of them, who were evidently out on the war-path, as they had all their paraphernalia on, were finely mounted, hideously painted, and profusely decorated with feathers. Possessing a fair knowledge of the savage character and rightly conceiving the intention of the savages, the station employees incontinently left for the fort for safety, and to give the alarm of the presence of the Indians.

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[1] The present Julesburg, until a few years ago, was called "Denver Junction"; the old town was situated a mile west on the opposite side of the river, and the Julesburg of 1867 was five miles farther west, north of the Platte, and is now known as Weir.

Captain O'Brien, who was in command of Fort Sedgwick, had already had some experience in savage warfare; and, although his force was extremely small, immediately upon receipt of the intelligence that hostile Indians were in the vicinity and that the overland stage station was in danger, he sounded boots and saddles. Thirty-five soldiers reënforced by volunteer citizens were soon on the trail of the savages, led by the gallant captain.

The government scouts had that morning reported that there were no Indians near, and consequently no apprehension of danger entered the minds of either soldier or civilian; little did they surmise that just out of sight over the divide more than two thousand of the painted devils were hiding.

The small band of savages that had entered the valley, and which had been first seen by the station men, were pursued for some distance, when they separated and rode out into the sand-hills. At almost the same instant, while the soldiers were after them, swarms of savages began to pour into the valley in the rear of the troops, about a half a mile west of them. They soon massed in great numbers, and rapidly closed every avenue of escape, riding in bands and giving vent to the most horrid war-whoops and unearthly yells as they saw their vantage.

Captain O'Brien ordered his troopers to dismount, and, enjoining his men to keep cool, to make every shot tell, turned upon the Indians and opened fire where they were thickest. There ensued one of the most sanguinary struggles, considering the few soldiers engaged, that the plains have ever witnessed.

"Load and fire at will" was the order, and the repeating rifles of the soldiers made awful havoc; the slaughter immediately in front of the white men was indeed terrible, and the Indians, demoralized at the manner in which their ranks were being decimated, hurriedly fell back. This permitted the troops to make considerable advance in the direction of the fort before they again halted.

Pressed on each flank and in rear, the troops were compelled to divert their fire to those points, but when the progress of the savages was again stayed, they once more concentrated their shots where they were densely massed in front. It appeared as if every ball found its victim. The discharges were so rapid, and the aim so careful, that the Indians had to give way before it, permitting the soldiers to advance once more. Thus they fought step by step, with great loss, but brave to the last degree.

It was a fortunate matter that the savages were armed principally with bows and arrows, there being very few rifles among them. Had it been otherwise, had the Indians been armed with repeating rifles, as were the whites, it is probable that not a single soldier would have been left to tell the story. The Indians filled the air with flights of arrows, but woe to the Indian who came within range of the deadly rifles! Many shafts with spent force fell harmlessly among the soldiers. Many inflicted slight wounds, and some were fatal. Some of the whites were killed by bullets, some by arrows.

Reënforcements from the fort finally opened an avenue of escape for the remaining whites, and eighteen of the forty men who went out in the morning came back; the rest were killed, scalped, and mutilated by the savages! Their bodies, however, were recovered and buried on the side of the bluff just south of the fort, and headboards with appropriate inscriptions mark the final resting-place of each.

When they found that a part of their prey would escape, the Indians began to turn their attention to pillaging at the stage station. One house contained a general assortment of groceries and outfitting goods. These they loaded upon their ponies and carried over the river. They then disappeared among the hills, leaving all the buildings on fire.

The stage company had a large amount of grain and supplies stored at the station. These were burned, and a treasure-coach with fifty thousand dollars in money was captured.

As soon as Captain O'Brien reached the fort, he ordered out the field-pieces and commenced shelling the enemy. Being a very expert gunner, he directed the fire of the guns so effectively as to kill a large number of savages. A crowd of redskins had gathered round some open boxes of raisins and barrels of sugar, when a shell burst in the midst of them, killing thirteen, as was afterward admitted by some of the Indians present. They also admitted the loss of more than a hundred warriors during the fight.

In January, 1867, Mr. J. F. Coad, now of Omaha, had a contract with the United States army to supply all the government military posts between Julesburg and Laramie with wood. He left home about the 17th of the month, and was escorted by a company of soldiers, who were en route to Fort Laramie, as far as forty miles beyond Julesburg, where he left them, and proceeded up Pole Creek, thence to Lawrence's Fork, where his men and wagons were, to commence work on his contract.

On the morning after his arrival at his wagon-camp, Mr. Coad and three of his employees, while loading wood about a mile and a half from camp, were attacked by about forty Indians, who came charging down the valley and prevented their retreat to the ranch. Seeing that they were entirely cut off and without any hope of assistance, they immediately concluded that their only escape from death was to run for their lives, and get back into the hills, if possible, believing that on account of the steep and rugged trail the savages could not pursue them.

It was fearfully cold, the thermometer ranging about twenty-five degrees below zero. Just as they started to put their plan in motion, another band of Indians was coming up the valley. These joined the others, and bore down on the white men.

On arriving at the base of the hill up which the white men were climbing, the Indians dismounted and started on foot after them. Seeing their tactics, Mr. Coad and his companions took off all their superfluous clothing and threw it away, notwithstanding the severity of the temperature. One of the men, in passing near a ledge of rock, discovered a hiding-place under it, dropped down and crawled in, filling his tracks with dirt as he backed into the cave. The Indians in trailing the party passed by this rock, returned to it, and held a council. They then went back to their horses. The other white men secreted themselves in a cañon, built a fire, and there remained until long after dark.

Left in the wagon-camp were three other men, who had a hard fight with the Indians from about eleven o'clock in the morning until three in the afternoon. They were inside of the cabin, and managed to keep the savages at a safe distance by firing at them through the crevices whenever they came within rifle-shot. The Indians kept riding in a circle around the cabin for several hours, and, finding they could not dislodge the three brave men, they abandoned the attempt, after losing one of their ponies, which received a rifle-bullet in his foreleg.

Some of the wood-choppers who had been at work a mile and a half up the valley also had an exciting experience during the day with the savages, but came out unharmed.

After the entire party of white men assembled in camp that night, a council was held, and it was determined to send a messenger to the commanding officer of the post at Julesburg, stating the condition of affairs and the number of Indians supposed to be in the vicinity.

The next morning Mr. Coad and his men gathered what cattle they could find, intending to leave for the fort. They started, got on top of the divide, and camped for the night. A raging blizzard set in, one of those terrible storms of snow and wind characteristic of the region, and the cattle sought shelter from the fearful weather by returning to the valley which they had left the day before, and where there was plenty of timber. The party was able, however, to hold a few head. So they hitched them up to the mess-wagon and returned to their old camp, intending to wait until the messenger they had sent to the fort should arrive with troops; but they were not sure he had gone safely through.

The next morning Mr. Coad started east on the divide on the only horse the Indians had left him, and about nine o'clock that night he met Lieutenant Arms, of the Second Cavalry, in command of Company E of that regiment.

Lieutenant Arms told him that he had met a large war-party of savages about four o'clock that afternoon, and was detained fighting them until after dark, when they disappeared and went south, at a point about ten miles west of Sidney. Lieutenant Arms had captured several head of cattle and two of Mr. Coad's horses from the Indians in this engagement.

Mr. Coad returned with the troops to the camp on Lawrence's Fork, arriving there at two o'clock in the morning. The temperature that night was thirty degrees below zero, and the troops suffered terribly from the extreme cold during their march. After arriving in the timber and getting something to eat, all turned in in their blankets and rested until daylight the next morning. As soon as breakfast was disposed of, the command started on their return march, crossed the divide which they had travelled over the previous night, and at three o'clock in the morning reached Pole Creek, where they rested until daylight. As soon as the day dawned they started south, endeavouring to find the trail of the Indians. The weather was extremely cold, the thermometer ranging about thirty degrees below zero. In the afternoon, while on the divide, the snow being very deep, the command was completely lost, and wandered aimlessly for several hours, not knowing which course to take. Finally, when it was nearly dark, they came within sight of Pole Creek, immediately recognized the locality, and were saved.

At night, after travelling all the next day, they reached a ranch about thirty-five miles west of Julesburg, where they stopped and were made comfortable. It was discovered, after the command had thawed out, that out of thirty-six men thirty were more or less frozen; some had frozen noses, some their ears, some their toes, and two had suffered so badly their feet had to be amputated. On the following day an ambulance arrived from Julesburg, to bring in the men who were in the worst condition. Those who were able mounted their horses and reached the post all right.

During those early years, before the growth of the great states beyond the Missouri, a mighty stream of immigration rushed onward to the unknown, illimitable West. Its pathway was strewn with innumerable graves of men, women, and little children. Silence and oblivion have long since closed over them forever, and no one can tell the sad story of their end, or even where they lay down. Occasionally, however, the traveller comes across a spot where some of these brave pioneers succumbed to death. One of the most noted of these may be seen about two miles from the town of Gering, on the Old

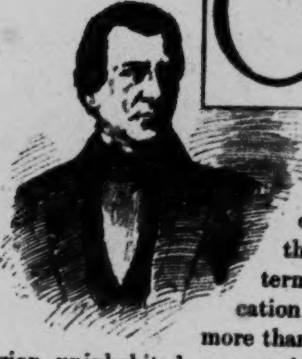
Trail, in what is now known as Scott's Bluffs County, Nebraska. Around the lonely grave was fixed a wagon-tire, and on it rudely scratched the name of the occupant of the isolated sepulchre, "Rebecca Winter," and the date, 1852. The tire remains as it was originally placed, and, as if to immortalize the sad fate of the woman, many localities in the vicinity derive their names from that on the rusty old wagon tire: "Winter Springs," "Winter Creek Precinct," and the "Winter Creek Irrigation Company"!

Julesburg 1865

CHAPTER VIII

THE PROBLEM OF THE MAILS BETWEEN ATLANTIC AND PACIFIC — THE WORLD-FAMED PONY EXPRESS — NECESSITY FOR IT — ITS ORIGINATOR — THE FIRM OF MAJORS, RUSSELL, & WADDELL — THE ROUTE — ORGANIZATION — ITS PARAPHERNALIA — DARING RIDERS — J. G. KELLEY'S STORY — COLONEL CODY'S STORY — INCIDENTS AND STORIES — OLD WHIPSAW AND LITTLE CAYUSE, THE PAWNEE — SLADE, THE DESPERADO — THE LYNCHING OF SLADE — ESTABLISHMENT OF THE TELEGRAPH

Senator Gwinn



OWING to the gold discoveries of 1849, the state of California was born in almost a single day. The ocean route to the Pacific was tedious and circuitous, and the impetuosity of the mining population demanded quicker time for the delivery of its mails than was taken by the long sea-voyage. From the terminus of telegraphic communication in the East there intervened more than two thousand miles of a region uninhabited, except by hostile tribes of savages. The mail from the Atlantic seaboard, across the Isthmus of Darien to San Francisco, took at least twenty-two days. The route across the desert by stage occupied nearly a month.

To reduce this time was the absorbing thought of the hour. Senator Gwinn of California, known after the Maximilian escapade in Mexico as "Duke Gwinn," first made the suggestion to the proprietors of the Overland Stage Line that if they could carry the mails to the Pacific coast in a shorter time than it then required, and would keep the line open all the year, increased emigration and the building of a railroad by the government would be the result.[1]

The following is an authentic history of the Pony Express, as related to the authors of this work by Colonel Alexander Majors, the surviving member of the once great firm of Russell, Majors, & Waddell, who were the originators of the scheme.

In the winter of 1859, while the senior partner of the firm was in Washington, he became intimately acquainted with Senator Gwinn of California, who, as stated previously, was very anxious that a quicker line for the transmission of letters should be established than that already worked by Butterfield; the latter was outrageously circuitous.

The senator was acquainted with the fact that the firm of Russell, Majors, & Waddell were operating a daily coach from the Missouri River to Salt Lake City, and he urged Mr. Russell to consider seriously the propriety of starting a pony express over the same route, and from Salt Lake City on to Sacramento.

After a lengthy consultation, Mr. Russell consented to attempt the thing, provided he could induce his partners to take the same view of the proposed enterprise as himself, and he then returned to Leavenworth, the headquarters of the firm, to consult the other members. On learning the proposition suggested by Senator Gwinn, both Colonel Majors and Mr. Waddell at once decided that the expense would be much greater than any possible revenue from the undertaking.

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[1] Senator Gwinn espoused the cause of the Southern Confederacy, and lost his wonderful prestige and influence in California, as well as a fortune, in his fealty to his native state, Mississippi. In 1866 he was created Duke of Sonora by Maximilian, in the furtherance of his visionary scheme of western empire, but died soon afterwards.

Mr. Russell, having, as he thought, partially at least, committed himself to the Senator, was much chagrined at the turn the affair had taken, and he declared that he could not abandon his promise to Mr. Gwinn, consequently his partners must stand by him.

That urgent appeal settled the question, and work was commenced to start the Pony Express.

On the Overland Stage Line operated by the firm, stations had been located every ten or twelve miles, which were at once utilized for the operation of the express; but beyond Salt Lake City new stations must be constructed, as there were no possible stopping-places on the proposed new route. In less then two months after the promise of the firm had been pledged to Senator Gwinn, the first express was ready to leave San Francisco, and St. Joseph, Missouri, simultaneously.

The fastest time ever thus far made on the "Butterfield Route" was twenty-one days between San Francisco and New York. The Pony Express curtailed that time at once by eleven days, which was a marvel of rapid transit at that period.

The plant necessary to meet the heavy demand made on the originators of the fast mail route over the barren plains and through the dangerous mountains was nearly five hundred horses, one hundred and ninety stations, two hundred men to take care of these stations, and eighty experienced riders, each of whom was to make an average of thirty-three and one-third miles. To accomplish this each man used three ponies on his route, but in cases of great emergency much longer distances were made.

The letters or despatches to be carried by the daring men were required to be written on the finest tissue paper, weighing half an ounce, five dollars being the charge for its transportation.

As suggested by two members of the firm, when they protested that the business would not begin to meet the expenses, their prophecies proved true; but they were not disappointed, for one of the main objects of the institution of the express was to learn whether the line through which the express was carried could be made a permanent one for travel during all the seasons of the year. This was determined in the affirmative.

One of the most important transactions of the Pony Express was the transmittal of President Buchanan's last message, in December, 1860, from the Missouri River to Sacramento, over two thousand miles, in eight days and a few hours, and the next in importance was the carrying of President Lincoln's message, his inaugural of March 4, 1861, over the same route in seven days and seventeen hours. This was the quickest time for horseback riding, considering the distance made, ever accomplished in this or any other country.

In the spring of 1860 Bolivar Roberts, superintendent of the western division of the Pony Express, came to Carson City, Nevada, to engage riders and station-agents for the Pony Express route across the Great Plains. In a few days fifty or sixty were engaged, — men noted for their lithe, wiry physiques, bravery and coolness in moments of great personal danger, and endurance under the most trying circumstances of fatigue. Particularly were these requirements necessary in those who were to ride over the lonely route. It was no easy duty; horse and human flesh were strained to the limit of physical tension. Day or night, in sunshine or in storm, under the darkest skies, in the pale moonlight and with only the stars at times to guide him, the brave rider must speed on. Rain, hail, snow, or sleet, there was no delay; his precious burden of letters demanded his best efforts under the stern necessities of the hazardous service; it brooked no detention; on he must ride. Sometimes his pathway led across level prairies, straight as the flight of an arrow. It was oftener a zigzag trail hugging the brink of awful precipices, and dark, narrow cañons infested with watchful savages eager for the scalp of the daring man who had the temerity to enter their mountain fastnesses.

At the stations the rider must be ever ready for emergencies; frequently double duty was assigned him. He whom he was to relieve had been murdered by the Indians perhaps, or so badly wounded, that it was impossible for him to take his tour; then the already tired expressman must take his place, and be off like a shot, although he had been in the saddle for hours.

The ponies employed in the service were splendid specimens of speed and endurance; they were fed and housed with the greatest care, for their mettle must never fail the test to which it was put. Ten miles at the limit of the animal's pace was exacted from him, and he came dashing into the station flecked with foam, nostrils dilated and every hair reeking with perspiration, while his flanks thumped at every breath!

Nearly two thousand miles in eight days must be made; there was no idling for man or beast. When the express rode up to the station, both rider and pony were always ready. The only delay was a second or two as the saddle-pouch with its precious burden was thrown on and the rider leaped into his place, then away they rushed down the trail and in a moment were out of sight.

Two hundred and fifty miles a day was the distance travelled by the Pony Express, and it may be assured the rider carried no surplus weight. Neither he nor his pony were handicapped with anything that was not absolutely necessary. Even his case of precious letters made a bundle no larger than an ordinary writing tablet, but there was five dollars paid in advance for every letter transported across the continent. Their bulk was not in the least commensurable with their number, there were hundreds of them sometimes, for they were written on the thinnest tissue paper to be procured. There were no silly love missives among them nor frivolous correspondence of any kind; business letters only, that demanded the most rapid transit possible and warranted the immense expense attending their journey, found their way by the Pony Express.

The mail-bags were two pouches of leather impervious to rain, sealed, and strapped to the rider's saddle before and behind. The pouches were never to contain over twenty pounds in weight. Inside the pouches, to further protect their contents from the weather, the letters and despatches were wrapped in oil-silk, then sealed. The pockets themselves were locked and were not opened between St. Joseph and Sacramento.

The Pony Express as a means of communication between the two remote coasts was largely employed by the government, merchants, and traders, and would eventually have been a paying venture had not the construction of the telegraph across the continent usurped its usefulness.

The arms of the Pony Express rider, in order to keep the weight at a minimum, were, as a rule, limited to revolver and knife.

The first trip from St. Joseph to San Francisco, nineteen hundred and sixty-six miles, was made in ten days; the second in fourteen, the third and many succeeding trips in nine. The riders had a division of from one hundred to one hundred and forty miles, with relays of horses at distances varying from twenty to twenty-five miles.

In 1860 the Pony Express made one trip from St. Joseph to Denver, six hundred and twenty-five miles, in two days and twenty-one hours.

The Pony Express riders received from one hundred and twenty to one hundred and twenty-five dollars a month. But few men can appreciate the danger and excitement to which those daring and plucky men were subjected; it can never be told in all its constant variety. They were men remarkable for their lightness of weight and energy. Their duty demanded the most consummate vigilance and agility. Many among their number were skilful guides, scouts, and couriers, and had passed eventful lives on the Great Plains and in the Rocky Mountains. They possessed strong wills and a determination that nothing in the ordinary event could balk. Their horses were generally half-breed California mustangs, as quick and full of endurance as their riders, and were as sure-footed and fleet as a mountain goat; the facility and pace at which they travelled was a marvel. The Pony Express stations were scattered over a wild, desolate stretch of country, two thousand miles long. The trail was infested with "road agents," and hostile savages who roamed in formidable bands ready to murder and scalp with as little compunction as they would kill a buffalo.

Some portions of the dangerous route had to be covered at the astounding pace of twenty-five miles an hour, as the distance between stations was determined by the physical character of the region.

The day of the first start, says Colonel Majors, on the 3d of April, 1860, at noon, Harry Roff, mounted on a spirited half-breed broncho, left Sacramento on his perilous ride, covering the first twenty miles, including one change, in fifty-nine minutes. On reaching Folsom he changed again and started for Placerville at the foot of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, fifty-five miles distant. There he connected with "Boston," who took the route to Friday's Station, crossing the eastern summit of the Sierra Nevada. Sam Hamilton next fell into line and pursued his way to Genoa, Carson City, Dayton, Reed's Station, and Fort Churchill, seventy-five miles. The entire run was made in fifteen hours and twenty minutes, the whole distance being one hundred and eighty-five miles, which included the crossing of the western summit of the Sierra Nevada through thirty feet of snow! Here Robert Haslam took the trail from Fort Churchill to Smith's Creek, one hundred and twenty miles through a hostile Indian country. From that point Jay G. Kelley rode from Smith's Creek to Ruby Valley, Utah, one hundred and sixteen miles. From Ruby Valley to Deep Creek, H. Richardson, one hundred and five miles; from Deep Creek to Rush Valley, old Camp Floyd, eighty miles. From Camp Floyd to Salt Lake City, fifty miles, the end of the western division, was ridden by George Thacher.

On the same day, and the same moment, Mr. Russell superintended the start of the Pony Express from its eastern terminus. An arrangement had been made with the railroads between New York and Saint Joseph for a fast train which was scheduled to arrive with the mail at the proper time. The Hannibal and St. Joseph Railroad also ran a special engine, and the boat which made the crossing of the Missouri River was detained for the purpose of instantly transferring the letters. Mr. Russell in person adjusted the letter-pouch on the pony. Many of the enthusiastic crowd who had congregated to witness the inauguration of the fast mail plucked hairs from the hardy little animal's tail as talismans of good luck. In a few seconds the rider was mounted, the steamboat gave an encouraging whistle, and the pony dashed away on his long journey to the next station.

The large newspapers of both New York and the Pacific coast were ready patronizers of the express. The issues of their papers were printed on tissue manufactured purposely for this novel way of transmitting the news. On the arrival of the pony from the West, the news brought from the Pacific and along the route of the trail was telegraphed from St. Joseph to the East the moment the animal arrived with his important budget.

To form some idea of the enthusiasm created by the inauguration of the Pony Express, the *St. Joseph Free Democrat* said in relation to this novel method of carrying the news across the continent: —

"Take down your map and trace the footprints of our quadrupedantic animal: From St. Joseph, on the Missouri, to San Francisco, on the Golden Horn — two thousand miles — more than half the distance across our boundless continent; through Kansas, through Nebraska, by Fort Kearney, along the Platte, by Fort Laramie, past the Buttes, over the Rocky Mountains, through the narrow passes and along the steep defiles, Utah, Fort Bridger, Salt Lake City, he witches Brigham with his swift pony-ship — through the valleys, along the grassy slopes, into the snow, into sand, faster than Thor's Thialfi, away they go, rider and horse — did you see them?"

"They are in California, leaping over its golden sands, treading its busy streets. The courser has unrolled to us the great American panorama, allowed us to glance at the home of one million people, and has put a girdle around the earth in forty minutes. Verily the riding is like the riding of Jehu, the son of Nimshi, for he rideth furiously. Take out your watch. We are eight days from New York, eighteen from London. The race is to the swift."

A whole volume might be gathered of the stirring incidents and adventures of the hardy employees of the Pony Express in its two years of existence. The majority of the actors in that memorable enterprise have passed beyond the confines of time.

J. G. Kelley, one of the veteran riders, now living in Denver, tells his story of those eventful days, when he rode over the lonely trail carrying despatches for Russell, Majors, & Waddell.

"Yes," he said, "I was a Pony Express rider in 1860, and went out with Bolivar Roberts, and I tell you it was no picnic. No amount of money could tempt me to repeat my experience of those days. To begin with, we had to build willow roads, corduroy fashion, across many places along the Carson River, carrying bundles of willows two and three hundred yards in our arms, while the mosquitoes were so thick that it was difficult to tell whether the man was white or black, so thickly were they piled on his neck, face, and arms.

"Arriving at the Sink of the Carson River, we began the erection of a fort to protect us from the Indians. As there were no rocks or logs in that vicinity, it was built of adobes, made from the mud on the shores of the lake. To mix this and get it to the proper consistency to mould into adobes, we tramped all day in our bare feet. This we did for a week or more, and the mud being strongly impregnated with alkali carbonate of soda, you can imagine the condition of our feet. They were much swollen and resembled hams. We next built a fort at Sand Springs, twenty miles from Carson Lake, and another at Cold Springs, thirty-seven miles east of Sand Springs. At the latter station I was assigned to duty as assistant station-keeper, under Jim McNaughton.

"The war against the Pi-Ute Indians was then at its height, and as we were in the middle of their country, it became necessary for us to keep a standing guard night and day. The Indians were often skulking around, but none of them ever came near enough for us to get a shot at him, till one dark night when I was on guard, I noticed one of our horses prick up his ears and stare. I looked in the direction indicated and saw an Indian's head projecting above the wall. My instructions were to shoot if I saw an Indian within rifle-range, as that would wake the boys quicker than anything else; so I fired and missed my man.

"Later on we saw the Indian camp-fires on the mountain, and in the morning many tracks. They evidently intended to stampede our horses, and if necessary kill us. The next day one of our riders, a Mexican, rode into camp with a bullet-hole through him from the left to the right side, having been shot by Indians while coming down Edwards Creek, in the Quaking Aspen Bottom. He was tenderly cared for but died before surgical aid could reach him.

"As I was the lightest man at the station, I was ordered to take the Mexican's place on the route. My weight was then one hundred pounds, while I now weigh one hundred and thirty. Two days after taking the route, on my return trip, I had to ride through the forest of quaking aspen where the Mexican had been shot. A trail had been cut through these little trees, just wide enough to allow horse and rider to pass. As the road was crooked and the branches came together from either side, just above my head when mounted, it was impossible for me to see ahead for more than ten or fifteen yards, and it was two miles through the forest. I expected to have trouble, and prepared for it by dropping my bridle-reins on the neck of the horse, putting my Sharp's rifle at full cock, and keeping both my spurs into the pony's flanks, and he went through that forest 'like a streak of greased lightning.'

"At the top of the hill I dismounted to rest my horse, and looking back saw the bushes moving in several places.

As there were no cattle or game in that vicinity, I knew the movements to be caused by Indians, and was more positive of it, when, after firing several shots at the spot where I saw the bushes in motion, all agitation ceased. Several days after that two United States soldiers, who were on their way to their command, were shot and killed from the ambush of those bushes, and stripped of their clothing by the red devils.

"One of my rides was the longest on the route. I refer to the road between Cold Springs and Sand Springs, thirty-seven miles, and not a drop of water. It was on this ride that I made a trip which possibly gave to our company the contract for carrying the mail by stage-coach across the Plains, a contract that was largely subsidized by Congress.

"One day I trotted into Sand Springs covered with dust and perspiration. Before I reached the station I saw a number of men running toward me, all carrying rifles, and one of them with a wave of his hand said, 'All right, you pooty good boy; you go.' I did not need a second order, and as quickly as possible rode out of their presence, looking back, however, as long as they were in sight, and keeping my rifle handy.

"As I look back on those times I often wonder that we were not all killed. A short time before, Major Ormsby of Carson City, in command of seventy-five or eighty men, went to Pyramid Lake to give battle to the Pi-Utes, who had been killing emigrants and prospectors by the wholesale. Nearly all of the command were killed. Another regiment of about seven hundred men, under the command of Colonel Daniel E. Hungerford and Jack Hayes, the noted Texas Ranger, was raised. Hungerford was the beau-ideal of a soldier, as he was already the hero of three wars, and one of the best tacticians of his time. This command drove the Indians pell-mell for three miles to Mud Lake, killing and wounding them at every jump. Colonel Hungerford and Jack Hayes received, and were entitled, to great praise, for at the close of the war terms were made which have kept the Indians peaceable ever since. Jack Hayes died several years ago in Alameda, California. Colonel Hungerford, at the ripe age of seventy years, is hale and hearty, enjoying life and resting on his laurels in Italy, where he resides with his granddaughter, the Princess Colonna.

"As previously stated it is marvellous that the pony boys were not all killed. There were only four men at each station, and the Indians, who were then hostile, roamed over the country in bands of from thirty to a hundred.

"What I consider my most narrow escape from death was being shot at by a lot of fool emigrants, who, when I took them to task about it on my return trip, excused themselves by saying, 'We thought you was an Indian.'"

Another of the daring riders of the Pony Express was Robert Haslam.[1] He says: "About eight months after the Pony Express was established, the Pi-Ute war commenced in Nevada. Virginia City, then the principal point of interest, and hourly expecting an attack from the hostile Indians, was only in its infancy. A stone hotel on C street was in course of construction, and had reached an elevation of two stories. This was hastily transformed into a fort for the protection of the women and children. From the city the signal-fires of the Indians could be seen on every mountain peak, and all available men and horses were pressed into service to repel the impending assault of the savages.

"When I reached Reed's Station, on the Carson River, I found no change of horses, as all those at the station had been seized by the whites to take part in the approaching battle. I fed the animal that I rode, and started for the next station, called Buckland's, afterward known as Fort Churchill, fifteen miles farther down the river. It was to have been the termination of my journey (as I had changed my old route to this one, in which I had had many narrow escapes, and been twice wounded by the Indians), and I had already ridden seventy-five miles; but, to my great astonishment, the other rider refused to go on. The superintendent, W. C. Marley, was at the station, but all his persuasion could not prevail on the rider, Johnson Richardson, to take the road. Turning then to me, Marley said: —

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[1] Known throughout the West as "Pony Bob."

"'Bob,' I will give you fifty dollars if you make this ride.'

"I replied, 'I will go at once.'

"Within ten minutes, when I had adjusted my Spencer rifle, which was a seven-shooter and my Colt's revolver, with two cylinders ready for use in case of emergency, I started. From the station onward it was a lonely and dangerous ride of thirty-five miles, without a change, to the Sink of the Carson. I arrived there all right, however, and pushed on to Sand Springs, through an alkali bottom and sand-hills, thirty miles farther, without a drop of water all along the route. At Sand Springs I changed horses and continued on to Cold Springs, a distance of thirty-seven miles. Another change and a ride of thirty more miles brought me to Smith's Creek. Here I was relieved by J. G. Kelley. I had ridden one hundred and eighty-five miles, stopping only to eat and change horses.

"After remaining at Smith's Creek about nine hours, I started to retrace my journey with the return express. When I arrived at Cold Springs, to my horror I found that the station had been attacked by Indians, the keeper killed, and all the horses taken away. I decided in a moment what course to pursue — I would go on. I watered my horse, having ridden him thirty miles on time, he was pretty tired, and started for Sand Springs, thirty-seven miles away. It was growing dark, and my road lay through heavy sage-brush, high enough in some places to conceal a horse. I kept a bright lookout, and closely watched every motion of my poor pony's ears, which is a signal for danger in an Indian country. I was prepared for a fight, but the stillness of the night and the howling of the wolves and coyotes made cold chills run through me at times; but I reached Sand Springs in safety and reported what had happened. Before leaving, I advised the station-keeper to come with me to the Sink of the Carson, for I was sure the Indians would be upon him the next day. He took my advice, and so probably saved his life, for the following morning Smith's Creek was attacked. The whites, however, were well protected in the shelter of a stone house, from which they fought the savages for four days. At the end of that time they were relieved by the appearance of about fifty volunteers from Cold Springs. These men reported that they had buried John Williams, the brave keeper of that station, but not before he had been nearly devoured by the wolves.

"When I arrived at the Sink of the Carson, I found the station-men badly frightened, for they had seen some fifty warriors, decked out in their war-paint and reconnoitring. There were fifteen white men here, well armed and ready for a fight. The station was built of adobe, and was large enough for the men and ten or fifteen horses, with a fine spring of water within a few feet of it. I rested here an hour, and after dark started for Buckland's, where I arrived without a mishap and only three and a half hours behind schedule time. I found Mr. Marley at Buckland's, and when I related to him the story of the Cold Springs tragedy and my success, he raised his previous offer of fifty dollars for my ride to one hundred. I was rather tired, but the excitement of the trip had braced me up to withstand the fatigue of the journey. After a rest of one and a half hours, I proceeded over my own route from Buckland's to Friday's Station, crossing the Sierra Nevada. I had travelled three hundred and eighty miles within a few hours of schedule time, and was surrounded by perils on every hand."

After the Pony Express was discontinued Pony Bob was employed by Wells, Fargo, & Company as an express rider in the prosecution of their transportation business. His route was between Virginia City, Nevada, and Friday's Station and return, about one hundred miles, every twenty-four hours; schedule time, ten hours. This engagement continued for more than a year; but as the Union Pacific Railway gradually extended its line and operations, the Pony Express business as gradually diminished. Finally the track was completed to Reno, Nevada, twenty-three miles from Virginia City, and over this route Pony Bob rode for more than six months, making the run every day, with fifteen horses, inside of one hour. When the telegraph line was completed, the Pony Express over this route was withdrawn, and Pony Bob was sent to Idaho, to ride the company's express route of one hundred miles, with one horse, from Queen's River to the Owyhee River. He was at the former station when Major McDermott was killed at the breaking out of the Modoc War.

On one of his rides he passed the remains of ninety Chinamen who had been killed by the Indians, only one escaping to tell the tale. Their bodies lay bleaching in the sun for a distance of more than ten miles from the mouth of Ives Cañon to Crooked Creek. This was Pony Bob's last experience as Pony Express rider. His successor, Macaulas, was killed by the Indians on his first trip.

A few daredevil fellows generally did double duty and rode eighty or eighty-five miles. One of them was Charles Cliff, now living in Missouri, who rode from St. Joseph to Seneca and back on alternate days. He was attacked by Indians at Scott's Bluff, receiving three balls in his body and twenty-seven in his clothes. He made Seneca and back in eight hours each way.

James Moore, the first post-trader at Sidney, Nebraska, made a ride which may well lay claim to be one of the most remarkable on record. He was at Midway Station, in Western Nebraska, on June 8, 1860, when a very important government despatch for the Pacific coast arrived. Mounting his pony, he sped on to Julesburg, one hundred and forty miles away, and he got every inch of speed out of his mounts. At Julesburg he met another important government despatch for Washington. The rider who should have carried the despatch east had been killed the day before. After a rest of only seven minutes and without eating a meal, Moore started for Midway, and he made the round trip, two hundred and eighty miles, in fourteen hours and forty-six minutes. The west-bound despatch reached Sacramento from St. Joseph in eight days, nine hours, and forty minutes.

The authors of this book may be pardoned for the inevitable introduction here of the part taken by one of them in this service. Their old friend Colonel Majors, a well-known figure for many years in frontier life, when speaking of "Billy" Cody, as he was called in those days, says that while engaged in the express service, his route lay between Red Buttes and Three Crossings,[1] a distance of one hundred and sixteen miles. It was a most dangerous, long, and lonely trail, including the perilous crossing of the North Platte River, which at that place was half a mile wide and, though generally shallow, in some places reached a depth of twelve feet, a stream often much swollen and very turbulent. An average of fifteen miles an hour had to be made, including change of horses, detours for safety, and time for meals.

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[1] So called because the trail ran through a cañon where the Sweetwater reached from wall to wall, and had to be crossed three times in a short distance.

He passed through many a gauntlet of death in his flight from station to station, bearing express matter that was of the greatest value.

Colonel Cody, in telling the story of his own experiences with the Pony Express, says: —

"The enterprise was just being started. The line was stocked with horses and put into good running order. At Julesburg I met Mr. George Chrisman, the leading wagon-master of Russell, Majors, & Waddell, who had always been a good friend to me. He had bought out 'Old Jules,' and was then the owner of Julesburg Ranch, and the agent of the Pony Express line. He hired me at once as a Pony Express rider, but as I was so young he thought I was not able to stand the fierce riding which was required of the messengers. He knew, however, that I had been raised in the saddle, — that I felt more at home there than in any other place, — and as he saw that I was confident that I could stand the racket, and could ride as far and endure it as well as some of the old riders, he gave me a short route of forty-five miles, with the stations fifteen miles apart, and three changes of horses. I was fortunate in getting well-broken animals, and being so light I easily made my forty-five miles on my first trip out, and ever afterward.

"As the warm days of summer approached I longed for the cool air of the mountains; and to the mountains I determined to go. When I returned to Leavenworth I met my old wagon-master and friend, Lewis Simpson, who was fitting out a train at Atchison and loading it with supplies for the Overland Stage Company, of which Mr. Russell, my old employer, was one of the proprietors. Simpson was going with this train to Fort Laramie and points farther west.

"'Come along with me, Billy,' said he, 'I'll give you a good lay-out. I want you with me.'

"'I don't know that I would like to go as far west as that again,' I replied, 'but I do want to ride the Pony Express once more; there's some life in that.'

"'Yes, that's so; but it will soon shake the life out of you,' said he. 'However, if that's what you've got your mind set on, you had better come to Atchison with me and see Mr. Russell, who, I'm pretty certain, will give you a situation.'

"I met Mr. Russell there and asked him for employment as a Pony Express rider; he gave me a letter to Mr. Slade, who was then the stage-agent for the division extending from Julesburg to Rocky Ridge. Slade had his headquarters at Horseshoe Station, thirty-six miles west of Fort Laramie, and I made the trip thither in company with Simpson and his train.

"Almost the first person I saw after dismounting from my horse was Slade. I walked up to him and presented Mr. Russell's letter, which he hastily opened and read. With a sweeping glance of his eye he took my measure from head to foot, and then said: —

"'My boy, you are too young for a Pony Express rider. It takes men for that business.'

"'I rode two months last year on Bill Trotter's division, sir, and filled the bill then; and I think I am better able to ride now,' said I.

"'What! are you the boy that was riding there, and was called the youngest rider on the road?'

"'I am the same boy,' I replied, confident that everything was now all right for me.

"'I have heard of you before. You are a year or so older now, and I think you can stand it. I'll give you a trial, anyhow, and if you weaken you can come back to Horseshoe Station and tend stock.'

"Thus ended our interview. The next day he assigned me to duty on the road from Red Buttes on the North Platte to the Three Crossings of the Sweetwater, — a distance of seventy-six miles, — and I began riding at once. It was a long piece of road, but I was equal to the undertaking; and soon afterward had an opportunity to exhibit my power of endurance as a Pony Express rider.

"For some time matters progressed very smoothly, though I had no idea that things would always continue so. I was well aware that the portion of the trail to which I had been assigned was not only the most desolate and lonely, but it was more eagerly watched by the savages than elsewhere on the long route.

"Slade, the boss, whenever I arrived safely at the station, and before I started out again, was always very earnest in his suggestions to look out for my scalp.

"'You know, Billy,' he would say, 'I am satisfied yours will not always be the peaceful route it has been with you so far. Every time you come in I expect to hear that you have met with some startling adventure that does not always fall to the average express rider.'

"I replied that I was always cautious, made detours whenever I noticed anything suspicious. 'You bet I look out for number one.' The change soon came.

"One day, when I galloped into Three Crossings, my home station, I found that the rider who was expected to take the trip out on my arrival, had gotten into a drunken row the night before and had been killed. This left that division without a rider. As it was very difficult to engage men for the service in that uninhabited region, the superintendent requested me to make the trip until another rider could be secured. The distance to the next station, Rocky Ridge, was eighty-five miles and through a very bad and dangerous country, but the emergency was great and I concluded to try it. I therefore started promptly from Three Crossings without more than a moment's rest. I pushed on with the usual rapidity, entering every relay station on time, and accomplished the round trip of three hundred and twenty-two miles back to Red Buttes without a single mishap and on time. This stands on the records as being the longest Pony Express journey ever made.

"A week after making this trip, and while passing over the route again, I was jumped on by a band of Sioux Indians who dashed out from a sand ravine nine miles west of Horse Creek. They were armed with pistols, and gave me a close call with several bullets, but it fortunately happened that I was mounted on the fleetest horse belonging to the express company, and one that was possessed of remarkable endurance. Being cut off from retreat back to Horseshoe, I put spurs to my horse, and lying flat on his back, kept straight for Sweetwater, the next station, which I reached without accident, having distanced my pursuers. Upon reaching that place, however, I found a sorry condition of affairs, as the Indians had made a raid on the station the morning of my adventure with them, and after killing the stock-tender had driven off all the horses, so that I was unable to get a remount. I therefore continued on to Ploutz' Station — twelve miles farther — thus making twenty-four miles straight run with one horse. I told the people at Ploutz' what had happened at Sweetwater Bridge, and went on and finished the trip without any further adventure.

"About the middle of September the Indians became very troublesome on the line of the stage-road along the Sweetwater. Between Split Rock and Three Crossings they robbed a stage, killed the driver and two passengers, and badly wounded Lieutenant Flowers, the assistant division agent. The redskinned thieves also drove off the stock from the different stations, and were continually lying in wait for the passing stages and Pony Express riders, so that we had to take many desperate chances in running the gauntlet.

"The Indians had now become so bad and had stolen so much stock that it was decided to stop the Pony Express for at least six weeks, and to run the stages only occasionally during that period; in fact, it would have been impossible to continue the enterprise much longer without restocking the line.

"While we were thus all lying idle, a party was organized to go out and search for stolen stock. This party was composed of stage-drivers, express-riders, stock-tenders, and ranchmen — forty of them all together — and they were well armed and well mounted. They were mostly men who had undergone all kinds of hardships and braved every danger, and they were ready and anxious to 'tackle' any number of Indians. Wild Bill, who had been driving stage on the road and had recently come down to our division, was elected captain of the company. It was supposed that the stolen stock had been taken to the head of the Powder River and vicinity, and the party, of which I was a member, started out for that section in high hopes of success.

"Twenty miles out from Sweetwater Bridge, at the head of Horse Creek, we found an Indian trail running north toward Powder River, and we could see by the tracks that most of the horses had been recently shod and were undoubtedly our stolen stage-stock. Pushing rapidly forward, we followed this trail to Powder River; thence down this stream to within about forty miles of the spot where old Fort Reno now stands. Here the trail took a more westerly course along the foot of the mountains, leading eventually to Crazy Woman's Fork — a tributary of Powder River. At this point we discovered that the party whom we were trailing had been joined by another band of Indians, and, judging from the fresh appearance of the trail, the united body could not have left this spot more than twenty-four hours before.

"Being aware that we were now in the heart of the hostile country and might at any moment find more Indians than we had lost, we advanced with more caution than usual and kept a sharp lookout. As we were approaching Clear Creek, another tributary of Powder River, we discovered Indians on the opposite side of the creek, some three miles distant; at least we saw horses grazing, which was a sure sign that there were Indians there.

"The Indians, thinking themselves in comparative safety, — never before having been followed so far into their own country by white men, — had neglected to put out any scouts. They had no idea that there were any white men in that part of the country. We got the lay of their camp, and then held a council to consider and mature a plan for capturing it. We knew full well that the Indians would outnumber us at least three to one, and perhaps more. Upon the advice and suggestion of Wild Bill, it was finally decided that we should wait until it was nearly dark, and then, after creeping as close to them as possible, make a dash through their camp, open a general fire on them, and then stampede the horses.

"This plan, at the proper time, was very successfully executed. The dash upon the enemy was a complete surprise to them. They were so overcome with astonishment that they did not know what to make of it. We could not have astounded them any more had we dropped down into their camp from the clouds. They did not recover from the surprise of this sudden charge until after we had ridden pell-mell through their camp and got away with our own horses as well as theirs. We at once circled the horses around toward the south, and after getting them on the south side of Clear Creek, some twenty of our men — just as the darkness was coming on — rode back and gave the Indians a few parting shots. We then took up our line of march for Sweetwater Bridge, where we arrived four days afterward with all our own horses and about one hundred captured Indian ponies.

"The expedition had proved a grand success, and the event was celebrated in the usual manner — by a grand spree. The only store at Sweetwater Bridge did a rushing business for several days. The returned stock-hunters drank and gambled and fought. The Indian ponies, which had been distributed among the captors, passed from hand to hand at almost every deal of cards. There seemed to be no limit to the rioting and carousing; revelry reigned supreme. On the third day of the orgy, Slade, who had heard the news, came up to the bridge and took a hand in the 'fun,' as it was called. To add some variation and excitement to the occasion, Slade got into a quarrel with a stage-driver and shot him, killing him almost instantly.

"The boys became so elated as well as 'elevated' over their success against the Indians that most of them were in favour of going back and cleaning out the whole Indian race. One old driver especially, Dan Smith, was eager to open a war on all the hostile nations, and had the drinking been continued another week he certainly would have undertaken the job, single-handed and alone. The spree finally came to an end; the men sobered down and abandoned the idea of again invading the hostile country. The recovered horses were replaced on the road, and the stages and Pony Express again began running on time.

"Slade, having taken a great fancy to me, said, 'Billy, I want you to come down to my headquarters, and I'll make you a sort of supernumerary rider, and send you out only when it is necessary.'

"I accepted the offer and went with him down to Horseshoe, where I had a comparatively easy time of it. I had always been fond of hunting, and I now had a good opportunity to gratify my ambition in that direction, as I had plenty of spare time on my hands. In this connection I will relate one of my bear-hunting adventures. One day, when I had nothing else to do, I saddled up an extra Pony Express horse, and, arming myself with a good rifle and pair of revolvers, struck out for the foot-hills of Laramie Peak for a bear-hunt. Riding carelessly along, and breathing the cool and bracing mountain air which came down from the slopes, I felt as only a man can feel who is roaming over the prairies of the far West, well armed and mounted on a fleet and gallant steed. The perfect freedom which he enjoys is in itself a refreshing stimulant to the mind as well as the body. Such indeed were my feelings on this beautiful day as I rode up the valley of the Horseshoe. Occasionally I scared up a flock of sage-hens or a jack-rabbit. Antelopes and deer were almost always in sight in any direction, but, as they were not the kind of game I was after on that day, I passed them by and kept on toward the mountains. The farther I rode the rougher and wilder became the country, and I knew that I was approaching the haunts of the bear. I did not discover any, however, although I saw plenty of tracks in the snow.

"About two o'clock in the afternoon, my horse having become tired, and myself being rather weary, I shot a sage-hen, and, dismounting, I unsaddled my horse and tied him to a small tree, where he could easily feed on the mountain grass. I then built a little fire, and broiling the chicken and seasoning it with salt and pepper, which I had obtained from my saddle-bags, I soon sat down to a 'genuine square meal,' which I greatly relished.

"After resting for a couple of hours, I remounted and resumed my upward trip to the mountain, having made up my mind to camp out that night rather than go back without a bear, which my friends knew I had gone out for. As the days were growing short, night soon came on, and I looked around for a suitable camping-place. While thus engaged, I scared up a flock of sage-hens, two of which I shot, intending to have one for supper and the other for breakfast.

"By this time it was becoming quite dark and I rode down to one of the little mountain streams, where I found an open place in the timber suitable for a camp. I dismounted, and, after unsaddling my horse and hitching him to a tree, I prepared to start a fire. Just then I was startled by hearing a horse whinnying farther up the stream. It was quite a surprise to me, and I immediately ran to my animal to keep him from answering as horses usually do in such cases. I thought that the strange horse might belong to some roaming band of Indians, as I knew of no white men being in that portion of the country at that time. I was certain that the owner of the strange horse could not be far distant, and I was very anxious to find out who my neighbour was, before letting him know that I was in his vicinity. I therefore resaddled my horse, and leaving him tied so that I could easily reach him, I took my gun and started out on a scouting expedition up the stream. I had gone about four hundred yards when, in a bend of the stream, I discovered ten or fifteen horses grazing. On the opposite side of the creek a light was shining high up the mountain bank. Approaching the mysterious spot as cautiously as possible, and when within a few yards of the light,—which I discovered came from a dugout in the mountain side,—I heard voices, and soon I was able to distinguish the words, as they proved to be in my own language. Then I knew that the occupants of the dugout were white men. Thinking that they might be a party of trappers, I boldly walked up to the door and knocked for admission. The voices instantly ceased, and for a moment a deathlike silence reigned inside. Then there seemed to follow a kind of hurried whispering, — a sort of consultation, — and then some one called out: —

"'Who's there?'

"'A friend and a white man,' I replied.

"The door opened, and a big ugly-looking fellow stepped forth and said: —

"'Come in.'

"I accepted the invitation with some degree of fear and hesitation, which I endeavoured to conceal, as I thought it was too late to back out, and that it would never do to weaken at that point, whether they were friends or foes. Upon entering the dugout my eyes fell upon eight as rough and villanous-looking men as I ever saw in my life. Two of them I instantly recognized as teamsters who had been driving in Lew Simpson's train, a few months before, and had been discharged.

"They were charged with the murdering and robbing of a ranchman; and, having stolen his horses, it was supposed that they had left the country. I gave them no signs of recognition, however, deeming it advisable to let them remain in ignorance as to who I was. It was a hard crowd, and I concluded the sooner I could get away from them the better it would be for me. I felt confident that they were a band of horse-thieves.

"'Where are you going, young man, and who's with you?' asked one of the men, who appeared to be the leader of the gang.

"'I am entirely alone. I left Horseshoe Station this morning for a bear-hunt, and not finding any bears I had determined to camp out for the night and wait till morning,' said I; 'and just as I was going into camp a few hundred yards down the creek I heard one of your horses whinnying, and then I came to your camp.'

"I was thus explicit in my statement in order, if possible, to satisfy the cut-throats that I was not spying upon them, but that my intrusion was entirely accidental.

"'Where's your horse?' demanded the boss thief.

"'I left him down at the creek,' I answered.

"They proposed going after the horse, but I thought that that would never do, as it would leave me without any means of escape, and I accordingly said, in hopes to throw them off the track, 'Captain, I'll leave my gun here and go down and get my horse, and come back and stay all night.'

"I said this in as cheerful and as careless a manner as possible, so as not to arouse their suspicions in any way or lead them to think that I was aware of their true character. I hated to part with my gun, but my suggestion of leaving it was a part of the plan of escape which I had arranged. If they have the gun, thought I, they will surely believe that I intend to come back. But this little game did not work at all, as one of the desperadoes spoke up and said: —

"'Jim and I will go down with you after your horse, and you can leave your gun here all the same, as you'll not need it.'

"'All right,' I replied, for I could certainly have done nothing else. It became evident to me that it would be better to trust myself with two men than with the whole party. It was apparent from this time on I would have to be on the alert for some good opportunity to give them the slip.

"'Come along,' said one of them, and together we went down the creek, and soon came to the spot where my horse was tied. One of the men unhitched the animal, and said, 'I'll lead the horse.'

"'Very well,' said I; 'I've got a couple of sage-hens here. Lead on.'

"I picked up the sage-hens which I had killed a few hours before, and followed the man who was leading the horse, while his companion brought up the rear. The nearer we approached the dugout the more I dreaded the idea of going back among the villanous cut-throats. My first plan of escape having failed, I now determined upon another. I had both of my revolvers with me, the thieves not having thought it necessary to search me. It was now quite dark, and I purposely dropped one of the sage-hens, and asked the man behind me to pick it up. While he was hunting for it on the ground, I quickly pulled out one of my Colt's revolvers and struck him a tremendous blow on the back of the head, knocking him senseless to the ground. I then instantly wheeled around and saw that the man ahead, who was only a few feet distant, had heard the blow and had turned to see what was the matter, his hand upon his revolver. We faced each other at about the same instant, but before he could fire, as he tried to do, I shot him dead in his tracks. Then, jumping on my horse, I rode down the creek as fast as possible, through the darkness and over the rough ground and rocks.

"The other outlaws in the dugout, having heard the shot which I had fired, knew there was trouble, and they all came rushing down the creek. I suppose by the time they reached the man whom I had knocked down that he had recovered, and hurriedly told them of what had happened. They did not stay with the man whom I had shot, but came on in hot pursuit of me. They were not mounted, and were making better time down the rough mountain than I was on horseback. From time to time I heard them gradually gaining on me.

"At last they came so near that I saw that I must abandon my horse. So I jumped to the ground, and gave him a hard slap with the butt of one of my revolvers, which started him on down the valley, while I scrambled up the mountain side. I had not ascended more than forty feet when I heard my pursuers coming closer and closer; I quickly hid behind a large pine-tree, and in a few moments they all rushed by me, being led on by the rattling footsteps of my horse, which they heard ahead of them. Soon they began firing in the direction of the horse, as they no doubt supposed I was still seated on his back. As soon as they had passed me I climbed further up the steep mountain, and knowing that I had given them the slip, and feeling certain I could keep out of their way, I at once struck out for Horseshoe Station, which was twenty-five miles distant. I had very hard travelling at first, but upon reaching lower and better ground I made good headway, walking all night and getting into the station just before daylight — footsore, weary, and generally played out.

"I immediately waked up the men of the station and told them of my adventure. Slade himself happened to be there, and he at once organized a party to go out in pursuit of the horse-thieves. Shortly after daylight twenty well-armed stage-drivers, stock-tenders, and ranchmen were galloping in the direction of the dugout. Of course I went along with the party, notwithstanding that I was very tired and had had hardly any rest at all. We had a brisk ride, and arrived in the immediate vicinity of the thieves' rendezvous at about ten o'clock in the morning. We approached the dugout cautiously, but upon getting in close proximity to it we could discover no horses in sight. We could see the door of the dugout standing wide open, and we marched up to the place. No one was inside, and the general appearance of everything indicated that the place had been deserted — that the birds had flown. Such, indeed, proved to be the case.

"We found a new-made grave, where they had evidently buried the man whom I had shot. We made a thorough search of the whole vicinity, and finally found their trail going southeast in the direction of Denver. As it would have been useless to follow them, we rode back to the station; and thus ended my eventful bear-hunt. We had no trouble for some time after that."

A friend who was once a station agent tells two more adventures of Cody's: "It had become known in some mysterious manner, past finding out, that there was to be a large sum of money sent through by Pony Express, and that was what the road agents were after.

"After killing the other rider, and failing to get the treasure, Cody very naturally thought that they would make another effort to secure it; so when he reached the next relay station he walked about a while longer than was his wont.

"This was to perfect a little plan he had decided upon, which was to take a second pair of saddle-pouches and put something in them and leave them in sight, while those that held the valuable express packages he folded up in his saddle-blanket in such a way that they could not be seen unless a search was made for them. The truth was, Cody knew that he carried the valuable package, and it was his duty to protect it with his life.

"So with the clever scheme to outwit the road agents, if held up, he started once more upon his flying trip. He carried his revolver ready for instant use and flew along the trail with every nerve strung to meet any danger which might confront him. He had an idea where he would be halted, if halted at all, and it was a lonesome spot in a valley, the very place for a deed of crime.

"As he drew near the spot he was on the alert, and yet when two men suddenly stepped out from among the shrubs and confronted him, it gave him a start in spite of his nerve. They had him covered with rifles and brought him to a halt with the words: 'Hold! Hands up, Pony Express Bill, for we know yer, my boy, and what yer carries.'

"'I carry the express; and it's hanging for you two if you interfere with me,' was the plucky response.

"'Ah, we don't want you, Billy, unless you force us to call in your checks; but it's what you carry we want.'

"'It won't do you any good to get the pouch, for there isn't anything valuable in it.'

"'We are to be the judges of that, so throw us the valuables or catch a bullet. Which shall it be, Billy?'

"The two men stood directly in front of the pony-rider, each one covering him with a rifle, and to resist was certain death. So Cody began to unfasten his pouches slowly, while he said, 'Mark my words, men, you'll hang for this.'

"'We'll take chances on that, Bill.'

"The pouches being unfastened now, Cody raised them with one hand, while he said in an angry tone, 'If you will have them, take them.' With this he hurled the pouches at the head of one of them, who quickly dodged and turned to pick them up, just as Cody fired upon the other with his revolver in his left hand.

"The bullet shattered the man's arm while, driving the spurs into the flanks of his mare, Cody rode directly over the man who was stooping to pick up the pouches, his back turned to the pony-rider.

"The horse struck him a hard blow that knocked him down, while he half fell on top of him, but was recovered by a touch of the spurs and bounded on, while the daring pony-rider gave a wild triumphant yell as he sped on like the wind.

"The fallen man, though hurt, scrambled to his feet as soon as he could, picked up his rifle, and fired after the retreating youth, but without effect, and young Cody rode on, arriving at the station on time, and reported what had happened.

"He had, however, no time to rest, for he was compelled to start back with his express pouches. He thus made the remarkable ride of three hundred and twenty-four miles without sleep, and stopping only to eat his meals, and resting then but a few moments. For saving the express pouches he was highly complimented by all, and years afterward he had the satisfaction of seeing his prophecy regarding the two road agents verified, for they were both captured and hanged by vigilantes for their many crimes."

"'There's Injun signs about, so keep your eyes open.' So said the station-boss of the Pony Express, addressing young Cody, who had dashed up to the cabin, his horse panting like a hound, and the rider ready for the fifteen-mile flight to the next relay. 'I'll be on the watch, boss, you bet,' said the pony-rider, and with a yell to his fresh pony he was off like an arrow from a bow.

"Down the trail ran the fleet pony like the wind, leaving the station quickly out of sight, and dashing at once into the solitude and dangers of the vast wilderness. Mountains were upon either side, towering cliffs here and there overhung the trail, and the wind sighed through the forest of pines like the mourning of departed spirits. Gazing ahead, the piercing eyes of the young rider saw every tree, bush, and rock, for he knew but too well that a deadly foe, lurking in ambush, might send an arrow or a bullet to his heart at any moment. Gradually, far down the valley, his quick glance fell upon a dark object above the bowlder directly in his trail.

"He saw the object move and disappear from sight down behind the rock. Without appearing to notice it, or checking his speed in the slightest, he held steadily upon his way. But he took in the situation at a glance, and saw that on each side of the bowlder the valley inclined. Upon one side was a fringe of heavy timber, upon the other a precipice, at the base of which were massive rocks.

"'There is an Indian behind that rock, for I saw his head,' muttered the young rider, as his horse flew on. Did he intend to take his chances, and dash along the trail directly by his ambushed foe? It would seem so, for he still stuck to the trail.

"A moment more and he would be within range of a bullet, when, suddenly dashing his spurs into the pony's sides, Billy Cody wheeled to the right, and in an oblique course headed for the cliff. This proved to the foe in ambush that he was suspected, if not known, and at once there came the crack of a rifle, the puff of smoke rising above the rock where he was concealed. At the same moment a yell went up from a score of throats, and out of the timber on the other side of the valley darted a number of Indians, and these rode to head off the rider.

"Did he turn back and seek safety in a retreat to the station? No! he was made of sterner stuff, and would run the gauntlet.

"Out from behind the bowlder, where they had been lying in ambush, sprang two braves in all the glory of their war-paint. Their horses were in the timber with their comrades, and, having failed to get a close shot at the pony-rider, they sought to bring him down at long range with their rifles. The bullets pattered under the hoofs of the flying pony, but he was unhurt, and his rider pressed him to his full speed.

"With set teeth, flashing eyes, and determined to do or die, Will Cody rode on in the race for life, the Indians on foot running swiftly toward him, and the mounted braves sweeping down the valley at full speed.

"The shots of the dismounted Indians failing to bring down the flying pony or their human game, the mounted redskins saw that their only chance was to overtake their prey by their speed. One of the number, whose war-bonnet showed that he was a chief, rode a horse that was much faster than the others, and he drew quickly ahead. Below the valley narrowed to a pass not a hundred yards in width, and if the pony-rider could get to this wall ahead of his pursuers, he would be able to hold his own along the trail in the ten-mile run to the next relay station.

"But, though he saw that there was no more to fear from the two dismounted redskins, and that he would come out well in advance of the band on horseback, there was one who was most dangerous. That one was the chief, whose fleet horse was bringing him on at a terrible pace, and threatening to reach there at the same time with the pony-rider.

"Nearer and nearer the two drew toward the path, the horse of Cody slightly ahead, and the young rider knew that a death-struggle was at hand. He did not check his horse, but kept his eyes alternately upon the pass and the chief. The other Indians he did not then take into consideration. At length that happened for which he had been looking.

"When the chief saw that he would come out of the race some thirty yards behind his foe, he seized his bow and quick as a flash had fitted an arrow for its deadly flight. But in that instant Cody had also acted, and a revolver had sprung from his belt and a report followed the touching of the trigger. A wild yell burst from the lips of the chief, and he clutched madly at the air, reeled, and fell from his saddle, rolling over like a ball as he struck the ground.

"The death-cry of the chief was echoed by the braves coming on down the valley, and a shower of arrows was sent after the fugitive pony-rider. An arrow slightly wounded his horse, but the others did no damage, and in another second Cody had dashed into the pass well ahead of his foes. It was a hot chase from then on until the pony-rider came within sight of the next station, when the Indians drew off and Cody dashed in on time, and in another minute was away on his next run."

The history of all Colonel Cody's encounters with the savages during the time he was in the service of the Pony Express would require many pages to recite, and as there is naturally a repetition in the manner of all attacks and escapes in his struggles with the Indians of the Great Plains and mountains, it would perhaps be but supererogation to tell them all without taxing the reader's interest.

Many stories of adventure are related of those terrible times, and at the beginning of the opening of the route across the continent it was with difficulty that the projectors of the dangerous undertaking found men willing to take the chances that constantly menaced the daring riders of the lonely route.

There was an old trapper whose only cognomen among the civilized men of the border was "Whipsaw." Of course he must have had another, but none ever knew of it or cared to inquire.

One day, while in his lonely camp attending to his duties, a Sioux Indian brought to him a captive Pawnee child about two years old. The little savage was stark naked and almost frozen. The Sioux, who was plainly marked by a horrid scar across his face, desired to dispose of the child to the trapper, and the latter, as was every one of that class now vanished forever, full of pity and kind-hearted to a fault, did not hesitate a moment, but traded

a knife for the helpless baby — all the savage asked for the little burden of humanity.

The old trapper took care of the young Pawnee, clothed him in his rough way, encased the little feet in moccasins, and with a soft doe-skin jacket the little fellow throve admirably under the gentle care of his rough nurse.

When the young Pawnee had reached the age of four years the old trapper was induced to take charge of one of the overland stations on the line of the Pony Express. The old agent began to love the young savage with an affection that was akin to that of a mother; and in turn the Pawnee baby loved his white father and preserver. As the little fellow grew in stature he evinced a most intense hatred for all members of his own dark-skinned race. He never let an opportunity go by when he could do them an injury, however slight.

Of course at times many of the so-called friendly Indians would visit the station and beg tobacco from the old trapper, but on every occasion the young Pawnee would try to do them some injury. Once, when he was only four years old, and a party of friendly Indians as usual had ridden up to the station, the young savage quietly crept to where their horses were picketed, cut their lariats, and stampeded all of them! At another time he made an attempt to kill an Indian who had stopped for a moment at the station, but he was too little to raise properly the rifle with which he intended to shoot him.

As it is the inherent attribute of all savages to be far in advance of the whites in the alertness and acuteness of two or three of the senses, the baby Pawnee was wonderfully so. He could hear the footsteps of a bear or the scratching of a panther, or even the tramp of a horse's hoof on the soft sod, long before the old trapper could make out the slightest sound. He could always tell when the Pony Express rider was approaching, miles before he was in sight, if in the daytime, and at night many minutes before the old trapper's ears, which were very acute also, could distinguish the slightest sound.

The boy was christened "Little Cayuse" because his ears could catch the sound of an approaching horse's foot long before any one else.

In the middle of the night, while his white father was sound asleep on his pallet of robes, the little Pawnee would wake him hurriedly, saying "Cayuse, cayuse!" whenever the Pony Express was due. The rider who was to take the place of the one nearing the station, would rise, quickly put the saddle on his broncho, and be all ready, when the pony arrived, to snatch the saddle-bags from him whom he was to relieve, and in another moment dash down the trail mountainward.

It was never too cold or too warm for the handsome little savage to get up on these occasions and give a sort of rude welcome to the tired rider, who, although nearly worn out by his arduous duty, would take up the baby boy and pet him a moment before he threw himself down on his bed of robes.

The young Pawnee had a very strange love for horses. He would always hug the animals as they came off their long trip, pat their noses, and softly murmur, "Cayuse, cayuse."[1]

The precocious little savage was known to every rider on the trail from St. Joe to Sacramento. Of course the Indians were always on the alert to steal the horses that belonged to the stations, but where Little Cayuse was living they never made a success of it, owing to his vigilance. Often he saved the animals by giving the soundly sleeping men warning of the approach of the savages who were stealthily creeping up to stampede the animals.

The boy was better than an electric battery, for he never failed to notify the men of the approach of anything that walked. So famous did he become that his wonderful powers were at last known at the headquarters of the great company, and the president sent Little Cayuse a beautiful rifle just fitted to his stature, and before he had reached the age of six he killed with it a great gray wolf that came prowling around the station one evening.

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[1] "Cayuse" means horse in some Indian dialects.

One cold night, after twelve o'clock, Whipsaw happened to get out of bed, and he found the little Pawnee sitting upright in his bed, apparently listening intently to some sound which was perfectly undistinguishable to other ears.

The station-boss whispered to him, "Horses?"

"No," replied the little Pawnee, but continued looking up into his father's face with an unmistakable air of seriousness.

"Better go to sleep," said Whipsaw.

Little Cayuse only shook his head in the negative. The station-boss then turned to the other men and said: "Wake up, all of you, something is going wrong."

"What is the matter?" inquired one of the riders as he rose.

"I don't exactly know," replied the boss, "but Cayuse keeps listening with them wonderful ears of his, and when I told him to go to sleep he only shook his head, and that boy never makes a mistake."

A candle was lighted, it was long after the express was due from the east.

The little Pawnee looked at the men and said, "Long time — no cayuse — no cayuse."

They then realized what the Pawnee meant: it was nearly two o'clock, and the rider from the East was more than two hours behind time. The little Pawnee knew it better than any clock could have told him, and both of the men sat up uneasy, fidgeting, for they felt that something had gone wrong, as it was beyond the possibility for any rider, if alive, to be so much behind the schedule time. They anxiously waited by the dim light of their candle for the sound of horses' feet, but their ears were not rewarded by the welcome sound.

Cayuse, who was still in his bed watching the countenances of the white men, suddenly sprang from his bed, and, creeping cautiously out of the door, carefully placed his ear to the ground, the men meanwhile watching him. He then came back as cautiously as he had gone out, and slowly creeping up to Whipsaw, merely said, "Heap cayuses!"

It was not the sound of the rider's horse whom they had so long been expecting, but a band of predatory Sioux bent on some errand of mischief; of that they were certain, now that the Pawnee had given them the warning. Little Cayuse took his rifle from its peg over his bed, and, walking to the door, peered out into the darkness. Then he crept along the trail, his ears ever alert. The men seized their rifles at the same moment, and followed the little savage to guard being taken by surprise.

All around the rude cabin which constituted the station, the boss had taken the precaution, when he first took charge, to dig a trench deep enough to hide a man, to be used as a rifle-pit in case the occasion ever offered.

It was to one of these ditches that Little Cayuse betook himself, and the men followed the child's example, and took up a position on either side of him. Lying there without speaking a word, even in a whisper, the determined men and the brave little Cayuse waited for developments.

Soon the band of savage horse-thieves arrived at a kind of little hollow in the trail, about an eighth of a mile from the door of the station. They got off their animals and, Indian-fashion, commenced to crawl toward the corral.

On they came, little expecting that they had been long since discovered, and that preparation was already made for their reception. One of them came so near the men hidden in the pit that the boss declared he could have touched him with his rifle. The old trapper was very much disturbed for fear that Little Cayuse would in his childish indiscretion open fire before the proper time arrived, which would be when the savages had entered the cabin. The child, however, was as discreet as his elders, and although it was his initial fight with the wily nomads of the desert, he acted as if he had thirty or forty years of experience to back him.

The band numbered six, as brave and determined a set of cut-throats as the great Sioux Nation ever sent out. The clouds had broken apart a little, and the defenders of the station could count their forms as they appeared between the diffused light of the horizon and the roof of the cabin.

On reaching the door the Indians stopped a moment, and with their customary caution listened for some sound to apprise them that the inmates were sleeping. Suspecting this to be the case, they pushed the door carefully open and entered the cabin, one after another.

Now had come the supreme moment which the boss had so patiently hoped for! Whipsaw rose to his feet, and without saying a word to them, his comrades, including Little Cayuse, followed him. He intended to charge upon the savages in the cabin, although there were six to three, for it would hardly do to count the little Pawnee in as a man. The rider who had been waiting for the arrival of the other then placed his rifle on the ground, and each taking their revolvers, two apiece in their hands, ready cocked, advanced to the door.

They knew that the fight would be short and hot, so with the Pawnee between them they arrived at the entrance. Now the Sioux evidently heard them, and came rushing out, but it was too late! The Pony Express men opened fire, and two of the savages bit the dust. They returned the salute, but with such careless aim that their shots were perfectly harmless; but as the white men fired again, two more of the savages fell, and only two were left. The rider got a shot in the shoulder, but he kept on with his revolver despite his pain, while the boss, who had fired all his shots, was compelled to throw the empty weapon into the persistent savage's face, while Little Cayuse kept peppering the other with small shot from his rifle.

Then the Indian at whom the boss had thrown his revolver came at him with his knife, and was getting the best of it, when Little Cayuse, watching his chance, got up close to the savage who was about to finish his father, and let drive into the brute's side a charge of shot that made a hole as big as a water-bucket, and the red devil fell without knowing what had hit him.

Both of the men were weak from loss of blood, and when they had recovered a little, not far away in the hollow they found the horses the savages had ridden and that of the express rider, all together. About a mile farther down the trail they found the dead body of the rider, shot through the head. His pony still had on the saddle and the mail-pouch, which the Indians had not disturbed. In the morning the men carried the remains of the unfortunate rider to the cabin and buried it near the station, and it may be truthfully said that if it had not been for the plucky little Pawnee, there would have been no mourners at the funeral.

That afternoon the men dug a trench into which they threw the dead Indians to get them out of the way, but while they were employed in the thankless work, Little Cayuse was discovered most unmercifully kicking and clubbing one of the dead warriors; then he took his little rifle and cocking it emptied its contents into the prostrate body.

The boss then took the weapon away from him, but the boy cried out to him, "See! see!"

Looking down closely into the face of the object of the boy's wrath, he discovered by that hideous scar the fiend who had captured Little Cayuse when a mere baby, the scar-faced Sioux from whom Whipsaw had purchased the boy.[1]

The employees of the Pony Express were different in character from the ordinary plainsmen of those days. The latter as a class were usually boisterous, indulged in profanity, and were fond of whiskey. Russell, Majors, & Waddell were God-fearing, temperate gentlemen themselves, and tried to engage no man who did not come up to their own standard of morality.

There was one notable exception in the person of Jack Slade, the station-agent at Fort Kearney, who was a desperado in the strictest definition of the term; that is, he was a coward at heart, as all of his class are, and brave only when every advantage was in his favour. The number of men he killed in cold blood would probably aggregate more than a score. One of his most damnable acts was the killing of an old French-Canadian trapper, whose name was Jules Bernard, who lived on a ranch on the eastern border of Colorado. While he lived there he got into a quarrel with Slade, and the latter swore he would kill Jules on sight. Slade waited five years for his opportunity. The story is told by an eye-witness as follows:[2]—

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[1] Cy Warman vouches for this story in his *Frontier Stories*. Copyright by Charles Scribner's Sons, 1898.

[2] Related to Harriet MacMurphy (to whom we are indebted for this truthful account) by Mrs. Elton Beckstead, who at the age of thirteen was Jules' wife and saw her husband murdered.

"I was thirteen years old when Jules married me and took me to his ranch at Cottonwood Springs. He had three log buildings side by side; one contained our private apartments, one was the store, and the other the kitchen and quarters for the man and his wife who ran the ranch for us.

"Slade was a Kentuckian, a very quiet man when sober, but terribly ugly when drinking. He came to our store one day fearfully drunk and swore he would shoot some d—d Frenchman before night, at the same time reaching for his pistol. Jules knew what he meant and sprang for his shot-gun, the only weapon near; before Slade could bring his pistol to bear, Jules levelled his gun and shot him in the stomach, filling it full of fine shot. He fell, and Jules, going to him, said he would take him to Denver and pay all his doctor-bills and other expenses if he would shake hands. Slade agreed to this, and Jules hitched up a team, hauled him clear to Denver, and paid his bills there for four or five months. He came near dying. Jules afterward heard that when Slade got well and left Denver, he had sworn he would shoot him the first time they met; so Jules was always ready for him.

"One morning long after this Jules started for his old ranch to get some horses and cattle that had been left there. He had to pass by Slade's place, and knowing that Slade had sworn to kill him, he took along a Frenchman living with us, called Pete Gazzous, and an American named Smith. They rode in a light wagon, and as they were all armed with rifles, pistols, and knives, Jules thought he was well prepared to defend himself.

"They watched very close until they got past Slade's ranch, but saw no signs of any one. They stopped at a spring a mile or two beyond to water their horses, and as Jules was stooping down to get a drink, a shot struck him in the leg and broke it just above the knee. He called to

Smith to unharness the horses, bring him one, and help him on so that they could get away; but the crowd was so frightened they could not stir, and in a few moments they were surrounded by Slade and his band of twenty-five men.

"They carried Jules to the ranch, and tied him up to a dry-goods box. Slade shot at him for a while, aiming as near as he could without hitting him, finally shooting off one of his ears; and then he ordered his twenty-five men to empty the contents of their revolvers into him. They then threw his body into a hole which they dug.

"The next day a lot of Slade's men came and took away all the goods in the trading-post; they left me about six hundred dollars. They got three thousand dollars that Jules had when he left, and they got the stock, I suppose. I never heard anything about them. They said afterward that Jules had money in the bank, but we could not find any bank-book, and if he had one it was probably on his person. I was just a child and did not know what to do. In a day or two a man came along who lived on a ranch farther west; he was going to Denver for goods; he took me, the man, and woman with him to Denver."[1]

Slade eventually drifted into Montana, and in 1865 was hanged by the vigilantes on suspicion of being the leader of a band of road agents.

He was living on a ranch near Virginia City at the time, and every few days came into town outrageously drunk, alarming the people by shooting through the streets, riding into saloons, and proclaiming himself to be the veritable "Bad man from Bitter Creek."

The belief that he was connected with matters worse than bad whiskey had overstrained the patience of the long-suffering citizens. Soon the suggestive and mysterious triangular little pieces of paper dropped upon the sidewalks of the town, surmounted with the skull and cross-bones, called the vigilantes to a meeting at which the death of Slade and two of his companions was determined upon. The next morning following the evening of the meeting, Slade came to town with his two men, actually sober, and went into a drug-store for a prescription. While waiting for his preparation, twelve shotguns suddenly covered them, and they were ordered to throw up their hands. Slade complied smilingly, but proposed to reason with them as to the absurdity of taking him for a bad man.

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[1] The child-wife does not tell (perhaps never knew) that Slade nailed one of her husband's ears to the door of the Pony Express station, and wore the other for several weeks as a watch-charm.

The only concession granted, however, was permission to send a note to his wife at the ranch, and an hour allowed to make his peace with the unknown.

Ropes were placed around the necks of the three men, who at the end of the allotted time were given short shrift and were soon hanging between heaven and earth. While their bodies were swaying in the breeze, Slade's wife suddenly appeared mounted on a fine horse, with a cocked pistol in each hand, determined to attempt a rescue. On observing that it was too late, she quailed before the determined countenances of the vigilantes. She soon left the scene of the lynching, and in a short time moved out of the country, carrying with her, as it was believed, a large amount of the proceeds of her husband's robberies.

In the winter of 1860 Mr. Edward Creighton, who had for many years been engaged in constructing telegraph lines all over the United States, determined to inaugurate a pet project he had entertained for a long time, to build one to the Pacific Coast.

In the year above referred to, he had many consultations with the stockholders of the Western Union, the result of which was that a preliminary survey was decided upon. Notwithstanding that travelling by the Overland coach was beset with great danger from attacks by road agents and Indians, Mr. Creighton was compelled to cross the continent by the only means of transportation; and, stopping at Salt Lake City, he excited the interest and enlisted the support of the great head of the Mormon Church.

It had been arranged to invite the association of the California Telegraph Company in the enterprise, and, notwithstanding the terrors of a midwinter journey, Mr. Creighton pressed on on horseback for Sacramento. It was a fearful trip, but the man who made it was stout of heart and he braved the rigours of the mountains, accomplished his mission, and in the spring of 1861 returned to Omaha to commence the great work. The United States, meanwhile, had granted a subsidy of forty thousand dollars a year to the first company who should build a line across the continent. It may well be imagined that a great race was immediately inaugurated for heavy wagers, between Mr. Creighton's force and that of the Californians, who were building eastwardly, each party trying to reach Salt Lake City before the other.

Mr. Creighton had eleven hundred miles to construct, while the California company's distance from the objective point was only four hundred and fifty; yet the indefatigable Mr. Creighton reached Salt Lake City with his completed line on the 17th of October, one week ahead of his competitors.

On the 24th of the same month, but a little more than half a year after its commencement, Mr. Creighton had established telegraphic communication from ocean to ocean. For his remuneration he took one hundred thousand dollars worth of the stock of the new enterprise at about eighteen cents on the dollar. When the project was completed, the company trebled its amount of shares and Mr.

Creighton's one hundred thousand dollars immediately enhanced to three hundred thousand. The stock at once rose to the value of eighty-five cents, and he sold out his original one hundred thousand dollars for eight hundred and fifty thousand, still retaining two hundred thousand dollars worth of stock.[1]

With the completion of the telegraph across the continent all the important news could be flashed from ocean to ocean in a few seconds, so the Pony Express ceased to be necessary; the great Concord coach, too, was limited to the mere transportation of passengers and express matter. It was the *avant courier* of more rapid transit by the palatial trains of the magnificent Union Pacific system which shod the old trail with steel, though at the beginning of the era of the Overland Stage such a railroad was regarded as an idle dream.

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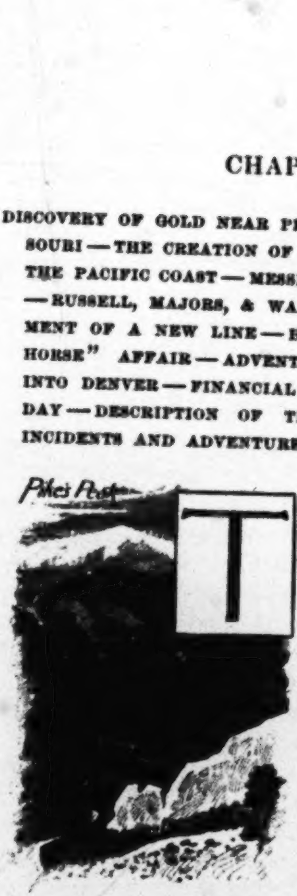
[1] Mr. Creighton died of paralysis in 1874, and his widow endowed a college named for him.

Pony Bob

CHAPTER IX

DISCOVERY OF GOLD NEAR PIKE'S PEAK.—EXODUS FROM MISSOURI—THE CREATION OF THE OVERLAND STAGE ROUTE TO THE PACIFIC COAST—MESSRS. RUSSELL AND JONES' FAILURE—RUSSELL, MAJORS, & WADDELL'S SUCCESSFUL ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW LINE—HOCKADAY AND LIGGETT'S "ONE-HORSE" AFFAIR—ADVENT OF THE FIRST STAGE-COACH INTO DENVER—FINANCIAL EMBARRASSMENT—BEN HOLLIDAY—DESCRIPTION OF THE OUTFIT OF THE ROUTE—INCIDENTS AND ADVENTURES



THE excitement caused in 1858 by the alleged discovery of gold in the vicinity of Pike's Peak created a fever among the people of the United States, and there was a mighty exodus from everywhere east of the Missouri, similar to that to the Alaskan regions to-day.

The Missouri River was at that time the western terminal of the few railroads then in existence, and there was very little probability that they would make farther progress toward the setting sun. The individual who had determined to start for the new, but delusive, western mountainous El Dorado, must perforce make his wearisome journey by slowly plodding ox-teams, pack-mules, or the lumbering stage-coach. Such means of travel had just been inaugurated by Mr. W. H. Russell (then the senior partner of the firm of Russell, Majors, & Waddell) and a Mr. John S. Jones of Missouri, who conceived the idea of putting on a line of coaches between the Missouri River and Denver — the latter place a mere mushroom hamlet, just struggling into existence, and whose future as yet no man could predict with any degree of certainty.

It was a bold undertaking, for they had to purchase all their equipage on credit, giving their notes payable in three months. One thousand large Kentucky mules were bought, and a sufficient number of coaches to supply the proposed route with a daily line each way.

There was already a semi-monthly line operated by Messrs. Hockaday and Liggett, running from St. Joseph, Missouri, to Salt Lake City. This line was poorly appointed. It consisted of a limited number of light, cheap vehicles, with but few animals to draw them. The same team was used for hundreds of miles, as no stations had been established on the long route. The teams were turned out to graze, and were obliged to stop often for that purpose. It sometimes required twenty-one days to make the trip from St. Joseph to Salt Lake.

Under the new régime of Russell & Jones, the coaches made their daily trips in six days to Denver, travelling about one hundred miles every twenty-four hours. The first stage arrived in Denver on the 17th of May, 1859, and its advent was regarded as a great success by those who knew nothing of the immense expense attending the enterprise. When the ninety-day notes given in payment for the outfit of the new route became due, the money was not forthcoming, and it became necessary for the wealthy firm of Russell, Majors, & Waddell[1] to meet the outstanding obligations of the delinquent Russell & Jones. To save the credit of their senior partner the firm had to pay the debts of the defunct concern, and take possession of all the mules, coaches, and other belongings of the stage-line to secure themselves for the amount they had advanced in establishing the Denver route.

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[1] Major John Burke thus briefly in a biographical sketch of these men tells of their antecedents: "Russell was a Green Mountain boy, who before his majority had gone West to grow up with the country, and after

In a few months the firm bought out the semi-monthly line of Hockaday and Liggett, believing that by uniting the two companies the business might be brought up to a paying standard, at least meet the expenses if nothing more.

As soon as Russell, Majors, & Waddell took hold of the line, the time between St. Joseph and Salt Lake, a distance of twelve hundred miles, was reduced to ten days. The coach ran daily both ways, and stations were established at distances varying from ten to fifteen miles along the whole route.

The original trail ran up the valley of the Smoky Hill, or the Smoky Hill Fork of the Republican,[1] but was shortly after changed to the valley of the Platte, and starting from St. Joseph,[2] went on to Fort Kearney, thence following the river to Julesburg, where it crossed the stream. From there to Fort Laramie, to Fort Bridger, thence to Salt Lake, through Camp Floyd, Ruby Valley, Carson City, Placerville, and Folsom to Sacramento.[3]

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teaching a three months' school on the frontier of Missouri, hired himself to an old merchant of Lexington at thirty dollars to keep books. . . . Alexander Majors was a son of Kentucky frontier mountain parentage, his father a colleague and friend of Daniel Boone. William Waddell, of Virginian ancestry, emigrants to the Blue Grass region of the same state as Majors, was bold enough for any enterprise, and able to fill any niche the West demanded."

[1] This stream was named by Fremont on his second expedition of exploration to the regions of the then unknown "Far West."

[2] The initial starting-point of the stage line was Leavenworth, on the Missouri, but after a few months it was changed to Atchison.

[3] This was the route of the Pony Express which was inaugurated some years afterward.

The old-line coach was a grand swinging and swaying vehicle, an imposing cradle on wheels, and hung on thoroughbraces instead of springs. It was drawn by six handsome horses or mules, which were changed every ten miles on the average; and they fairly flew over the level road. Baggage was limited to twenty-five pounds, which, with the care of the passengers, mail, and express, was in charge of the conductor, who was the legitimate captain of the strange craft in its long journey across the continent. He sat beside the driver on the box, and both of them used to sleep in their places thirty or forty minutes at a time, while spinning along on good roads at the rate of eight or ten miles an hour.

Over each two hundred and fifty miles of road an agent was installed, and was invested with great authority. His geographical jurisdiction was known as a "division," and his duty consisted in purchasing horses, mules, harness, and the food for both men and animals. He distributed these things at the different stage-stations when, according to his judgment, they needed them. He also had charge of the erection of all buildings and the water-supply, usually wells. He also paid the station-keepers, hostlers, drivers, and blacksmiths, and he engaged and discharged whomsoever he pleased; in fact, he was a great man in his division, and generally a man of more than average intelligence.

The conductor's tour of duty was about the same length as the agent's, or about two hundred and fifty miles. He sat with the driver, and often, when necessary, rode that great distance all night and all day without other rest or sleep than that he could obtain while in his seat on top of the flying coach. Drivers went back over the same route — over exactly the same length of road, and naturally became so familiar with it that the darkest night had no terrors for them.

The distance from St. Joseph to Sacramento by the stage-coach route was nearly nineteen hundred miles. The trip was often made in fifteen days, but the time specified by the mail contracts, and required by the government schedule, was limited to nineteen days. This was to give ample allowance for possible winter storms and snows, or other causes of detention.

The stage company had everything in their charge under the most rigid discipline, and the system was as nearly perfect as possible.

The enterprise, financially, was a losing one for the great firm which organized and operated it, the entire expense exceeding the receipts by many hundreds of thousands of dollars. Messrs. Russell, Majors, & Waddell, however, continued its operation until March, 1862, when the whole concern was transferred to Ben Holliday.[1]

When Holliday took charge, the United States mail was given to it and immediately the line became a paying institution. The government expended, in quarterly payments, eight hundred thousand dollars a year for transporting the mails from the Missouri River to San Francisco.

It was very fortunate for the government and the people generally that the stage-line was organized at the time it was, and kept in such perfect condition on the Middle Route, as it was called, when the Civil War commenced, for it would have been impossible to transport mails on the Southern Route, previously patronized by the government. This route ran from San Francisco via Los Angeles, El Paso, and Fort Smith to St. Louis, and the Confederate government would not have allowed it to run through that portion of their country during the war.

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[1] Ben Holliday was one of those wonderful characters developed by a life of adventure and danger, having been nurtured amid the most startling incidents of the frontier. He was born near the old Blue Lick battlefield. At seventeen he was Colonel Doniphan's courier. When only twenty-eight years old he entered Salt Lake Valley with fifty wagonloads of goods, and was endorsed by Brigham Young as being worthy of the confidence of his people. Ten years later he was the head of the Overland Route; at forty-five the owner of sixteen steamers on the Pacific Ocean, with an immense trade to Central America, China, and Japan.

During the war there was a vast amount of business, both in mail, express, and passengers, as it was the only practicable line between California and the great states east of the Missouri River.

Under the indefatigable Ben Holliday his stage-coaches penetrated every considerable mining camp in the mountains, and as the government would not, or could not, establish post-offices at these remote points, the stage company became their own postmasters. They conveyed letters in their own official envelopes, first placing thereon a United States stamp. Twenty-five cents was charged for every letter, consequently the revenue from this source was enormous.

Occasionally on the remote plains, or in the fastnesses of the mountains, the proprietor of a little store, where he kept a heterogeneous assortment of such goods as were required by the hardy miners, would constitute himself the postmaster. Of course he charged exorbitant rates for the transmission of the mail to the nearest regular station. It is recorded of one of these self-appointed officials that, although he transported the mail but once a month, he still charged twenty-five cents for each letter. He used an empty barrel for the reception of mail. He cut a hole in the top, and posted above it the following suggestive warning to all who sent letters from his place: "This is the Post-Office. Shove a quarter through the hole with your letter. We have no use for stamps as I carry the mail."

The business of the old line coach increased with startling rapidity. It aggregated an enormous sum every year. For carrying the mails alone over the whole route, the government paid twelve hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

The drivers of the Overland coaches received from one hundred and fifty to two hundred and fifty dollars a month, and their keep. Their wages were graduated by their ability and length of service. Such large salaries were paid because of the great risk run by the brave men, for their duty was a continuously hazardous one.

All classes of men were to be found among these drivers, from the graduate of Yale and Harvard to the desperado deep-dyed in his villainy. The latter sometimes enlisted in the work for the sole purpose of robbery. The stage with its valuable load of riches and the wealth of its passengers excited his cupidity.

It is told in the annals of those troublous times on the Old Trail, how once, in July, 1865, a coach loaded with seven passengers and an immense amount of gold bullion and other treasure was sacrificed to these robbers. The passengers were all frontier men, well used to the contingencies of that trying era; they were also aware of the strong probability of the coach being attacked before it reached its destination, and were prepared to repel any premeditated attempt of that character. All were fully armed, principally with double-barrelled guns loaded with twenty-six buckshot, a formidable charge with which to plug a man. They were determined that their hard-earned wealth should not be taken from them without a struggle. They watched in turns for the first demonstration of the road agents, having made up their minds to get the first crack at the thieves.

The driver was known as Frank Williams, and the man who occupied the post of honour, sitting at his right on the box, was one of the would-be robbers. On arriving at a very lonely spot on the trail, this individual on top cried out that the robbers were upon them, and a hurried shot was fired from the outside. At the same moment the men inside discharged their pieces. A regular volley was then shot at the passengers from an ambush alongside the trail, four fell dead, another was severely wounded in three places, and one saved his life by lying perfectly still and feigning death as the thieves emerged from the brush to fire a second time. One of the other passengers was mortally wounded and the other escaped uninjured by secreting himself in the brush which fringed the trail.

It seems that the driver had purposely engaged in the service of the company for just such an opportunity as this, and he deliberately drove his coach into this sequestered spot where the robbers were to attack it by appointment. It is alleged that he received his share of the spoils, and then left the service incontinently. His ill-gotten wealth, however, did him very little good; for he was tracked to Denver, and hanged with that sudden promptness for which "Judge Lynch's Court" is noted, a court that brooks no delay in the execution of its decisions, and from which there is no appeal.

Over seventy thousand dollars was the harvest of this raid, but none of the robbers were ever caught excepting the driver, upon whom, as stated, a well-merited punishment was inflicted.

During the Civil War his route passed through the Sioux country, a tribe that was at war with the whites, and as there were not enough troops to protect the line, it was changed from South Pass to Bridger's Pass on the Bitter Creek route, or as it was then known, "The Cherokee Trail."

The mail-line was often attacked by Indians, who killed the employees and passengers, robbed and burnt the stations, and stole the stock.

Early in the year 1862 the Indians made continuous raids on the coaches and stations between Fort Laramie and the South Pass. In April of that year a terrible battle occurred between the mail-stage and the Indians on the Sweetwater River near Split Rock, or Devil's Creek. The white party consisted of nine men with two coaches loaded with mail. They were in charge of Lem Flowers, the division agent, and Jimmie Brown, the conductor. The Indians began the attack at early dawn and the white men were so harassed that they were compelled to run the two coaches alongside of each other, pile the mail-sacks between the wheels, and throw sand over them for breastworks. From this barricade they fought the savages the whole day, but they lost all the stock, and six of the men were wounded. Several Indians were killed during the fight, and when night came on they withdrew. Under cover of the darkness the men took the front wheels of the running-gear of the coaches, put the wounded upon them, and, drawing it themselves, made their escape to the station of the Three Crossings of the Sweetwater River.

One of the employees who passed over the route shortly after the fight and visited the scene of the battle in company with the notorious Slade, who was then division agent, says: "The coaches were still standing as they were placed by the party in the fight, completely riddled with bullets and arrows. Every vestige of leather straps and cushions was stripped off, the mail-sacks cut open, their contents thrown out, and the sacks themselves carried off. Valuable letters, drafts, and bills for large amounts were scattered all over the ground. This mail was gathered up by the employees, put in gunny sacks, hauled to Julesburg, and from there forwarded to the Post-Office Department at Washington."

Another memorable raid was made by the savages on the old line mail-route on Sunday, the 7th of August, 1864. It was a simultaneous attack on that portion of the line extending over two hundred miles from Julesburg eastwardly to Liberty Farm, at the head of the Little Blue River. The mail-coaches, the stations, travelling freight caravans, ranches, and parties putting up hay were alike attacked. Forty people were killed, many ranches and trains burned, much stock and other property stolen and destroyed in that eventful raid.

At last the raids of the savages along the North Platte had become so frequent, and the duty so hazardous, that it was almost impossible for the Overland Stage Company to find drivers, although the highest wages were offered. At this juncture W.F. Cody decided to turn stage-driver and his services were gladly accepted.

While driving a stage between Split Rock and Three Crossings, he was set upon by a band of several hundred Sioux. Lieutenant Flowers, assistant division agent, sat on the box beside Cody, and there were half a dozen passengers well armed inside. Cody gave the reins to Flowers, applied the whip, and the passengers defended the stage in a running fight. Arrows fell around and struck the stage like hail, wounding the horses and dealing destruction generally, for two of the passengers were killed and Flowers badly wounded. Cody seized the whip from the wounded officer, applied it savagely, shouting defiance, and drove on to Three Crossings, thus saving the stage.

The only period when the long route up the Platte Valley enjoyed an immunity from the continuous trouble with the savages, before the completion of the Union Pacific Railroad, was when General Albert Sidney Johnston's army, in 1857, had been mobilized for the impending Mormon war. More than five thousand regular soldiers, with its large commissary trains and their complement of teamsters, all well armed, together with batteries of artillery, in passing through the country so intimidated the Indians, who had never before seen such an array of their enemies, that they remained at a respectful distance from the trail.

In the spring of 1865 the Indians seemed more determined than ever to wage a relentless war along the line of the Overland Stage.

A regular army officer in his journal says :—

"During the time when we were guarding Ben Holliday's stage-coaches, and when attacks on them were of frequent occurrence, I had an adventure which I think is worth relating.

"I was out at one of the lower ranches, and the Indians were very troublesome. Our guards were nearly all sick or wounded, and the coaches had to go out insufficiently protected.

"One evening the coach was late, and, as to be behind time was a sure sign that something was wrong, we all felt very uneasy. The drivers made it a rule to get from one station to another on time, and if they did not arrive, parties were immediately started out to the next ranch, ten miles below, to see what the matter was, the stations being eight, ten, and twelve miles apart.

"On the particular evening in question I had got tired of waiting, and gone over to the stable-keeper to see if we had not better take the change horses, go down the road, and try if we could not find the coach. It was due at the station at eight-thirty in the evening, and it was now ten, so I was confident it had been attacked or broken down. While we were talking, the sentinel on the outpost, whose business it was to look out for the stage and give notice of its approach, signalled that the coach was coming. We all ran down the road to meet it, and soon saw it coming slowly along with three horses instead of four, and the driver driving very slowly, as if he were going to a funeral, or hauling wounded.

"When we came up to the coach we learned that he was indeed both conveying a corpse and wounded. On the arrival of the party at the ranch, Captain Hancock, who was a passenger, related to me all that had happened, and I repeat the story as it fell from his lips.

"'We were,' said the captain, 'driving along smartly in the bottom, about four miles below, when, just as we crossed a little ravine, some twenty Indians jumped out of the long grass and fired on us. The first volley killed Mr. Cinnamon, a telegraph operator, who was a passenger, on his way from Plum Creek to some point up the river. He was riding on the box with the driver when he received the fatal shot, and the driver caught his body just as it was falling forward off the coach on the rear horses. He put Cinnamon's corpse in the front boot among the mail bags, where it now is.

"'The first fire had also killed our nigh wheeler, and, as the coach was going pretty fast at the time, the horse was dragged a considerable distance, and his hind leg becoming fast between the spokes of the fore wheel, his body was drawn up against the bed of the coach and all further progress completely blocked.

"'The driver took it very coolly, first swearing fearfully at the Indians, toward whom he cracked his whip repeatedly, as if flaying their naked backs, and then, having vented his spleen, he quietly descended from his box and stripped the harness off the dead horse.

"'Meanwhile the Indians had been circling around us, firing into the coach every few minutes, and I had got under the wagon with my clerks, the better to be protected and to fire at the Indians, who could be seen best from the ground as they moved against the horizon.

"'The driver tried in vain to extricate the leg of the dead horse from the wheel, but it was firmly wedged in, and after uniting my strength to his, I found it necessary to take my knife and amputate the leg at the knee-joint.

The body was at length removed, and mounting the box, the driver bid us get in, and we were off once more. One of the clerks had been severely wounded, and, as his wound was quite painful, we had to drive very slowly; so we were late in getting in.'

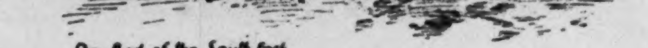
"While the captain was talking, the driver came to the door to say the coach was waiting, for on the Plains stages stop not for accidents or dead men. I bade my friend good-night, hoping he would not again be interrupted on his journey by the redskins, and, the driver cracking his whip, the four fresh bays bounded forward at a gallop, and soon carried the coach out of sight of the valley.

"Next day we buried poor Cinnamon, and sent the wounded man to McPherson, where he could have medical attendance, and we were pleased to learn he speedily recovered.

"I rode down to where the coach had been attacked, and saw the dead horse and the ravine from which the Indians had sprung. The fight had evidently been a sharp one, and I could see by the trail that the savages had followed the coach nearly to the ranch, and then struck across toward the Republican, never stopping, in all probability, until they reached it, ninety miles distant."

An idea may be formed of the immense proportions to which the old mail-line service had grown, when in November, 1866, Ben Holliday sold out his interest to Wells, Fargo, & Company. The main line and its branches were transferred for one million five hundred thousand dollars in cash, and three hundred thousand dollars in the stock of the Express Company. This vast sum only covered the animals, rolling stock, stations, etc., but in addition to this, the Express Company was to pay the full value of the grain, hay, and provisions on hand at the time of the transfer, and this amounted to nearly six hundred thousand dollars.

The old line of mail-service continued until its usefulness was gradually usurped by the completion of the Union and Central Pacific railroads. The coaches started daily from the eastern and western terminals of the rapidly approaching iron trail, the gap between them lessening until on the day of driving the last spike with the junction of the rails the old stage-line through the Platte Valley had vanished forever.



Dry Bed of the South Fork of the Platte. (1890)

CHAPTER X

SCENERY AND HISTORICAL LOCALITIES ON THE ROUTE OF THE OLD TRAIL — LOUP FORK — DE SMET'S ACCOUNT OF A WATER-SPOUT — WOOD RIVER — BRADY'S ISLAND — ASH HOLLOW — JOHNSON'S CREEK — SCOTT'S BLUFF — INDEPENDENCE ROCK AND ITS LEGEND — CHIMNEY ROCK — CRAZY WOMAN'S CREEK — LARAMIE PLAINS — LEGENDS AND TRADITIONS ABOUT THE GREAT SALT LAKE — EARLY SURVEYS

General Fremont

FROM the earliest westward march of civilization, the beautiful valley of the Platte, through which the Salt Lake Trail coursed its way, has been a grand pathway to the mountains, and thence over their snow-capped summits to the golden shores of the Pacific Ocean.

In a little more than a third of a century, through the agency of that greatest of civilizers, the locomotive, the charming and fertile valley has been carved into prosperous commonwealths, whose development from an almost desert waste is a marvellous monument to the restless energy of the American people, and of their power to conquer the wilderness.

In 1842 Lieutenant John C. Fremont travelled up the Blue, on his first exploring expedition, and arrived in the Platte at Grand Island, where the party separated, a

portion proceeding up the North Fork of the river, toward Laramie, and another up the South Fork. The following year the great pathfinder ventured on a second expedition by the way of the Kansas and Republican rivers, reaching the Platte at the mouth of Beaver Creek.

In 1847 the Platte Valley became the highway of the Mormons in their wonderful exodus from Illinois to Utah, and ten years later the trails made by that remarkable sect were followed by the rush of pioneers to the newly discovered gold fields of California.

Twelve years later, the beautiful valley was traversed by a greater rush of adventurers than ever before in its history. In the summer of 1850 Mr. Green Russell and his adventurous companions discovered gold on a tributary of the Platte. The report spread so rapidly that the greatest excitement at once developed on the frontier of Missouri, which was then the boundary between civilization and the unknown Far West. In the following spring the exodus to the gold fields began. The old overland route was famed for its picturesque scenery, but as the weary traveller slowly trod the dangerous trail, he was too often in constant dread of attacks by the bloodthirsty savages to allow his mind to dwell upon the details of the magnificent landscape. To-day, however, as the same route is practically shod with iron, the tourist, from the windows of his car on the Union Pacific, may safely contemplate the historic valley. Its beautiful towns and hamlets, its cultivated plains, its watercourses, its skyward-reaching peaks, may be seen in a security which would have passed the very dreams of a pioneer fifty years ago.

The scenery is sufficiently wild to please the most exacting, even to-day; for its isolated buttes, rocky bluffs, lightning-splintered gorges, foaming torrents, fantastically formed bowlders, and towering mountains brook no change at the hands of puny man, and are as firm as the rock itself. Under a sky that nowhere else seems to be of such an intensely cerulean hue, the charm of the region is intensified.

Before a European ever looked upon it, the Platte Valley was for centuries, in all probability, a gateway to the mountains. The prehistoric mound-builders, perhaps, travelled its lonely course, and on through the portals of the great Continental Divide, to the southern sea. The rude, primitive savage of North America, with whom the hairy mammoth and primeval elephant were contemporary, in a geological epoch, whose distance in the misty past appalls, traversed the silent trail across the continent. He packed on his back the furs of the colder regions, where he lived. He carried copper from the mines on the shores of Lake Superior; the horns of the moose, elk, and deer; robes of the buffalo, the wolf, and kindred animals. Among his merchandise were masses of red pipestone from the sacred quarries east of the Missouri. He journeyed with these treasures to the people of the southwest and exchanged them for what to him were equally precious: brilliant feathers of tropical birds; valuable gems, like the revered turquoise; rare metals; woven fabrics, and other commodities foreign to his own wind-swept and snow-bound plains.

The Platte Valley, for untold ages, was a beautiful, awful wilderness, thronged by stately headed elk, and the resort of vast herds of buffalo, deer, and antelope. Until a few years ago their skulls and bones could still be seen in some localities, scattered thick upon the ground between the bluffs and the river. Now all the game has vanished, excepting, perhaps, a few antelope and deer in some favoured mountain recess, where the white man has not invaded the rocky soil with his plough.

Until fifty years ago the whole region watered by the

Platte was regarded as a veritable desert, never to be brought under the domain of agriculture, but forever doomed to a hopeless sterility. Its inhabitants were a wild, merciless horde of savages, whose only aim was murder, and an unceasing warfare against any encroachment upon their domain by the hated palefaces.

The river is very shallow, and for that reason was called by the Otoes, whose country embraced the region at its mouth, the Ne-bras-ka, and re-christened the Platte by the French trappers, a term synonymous to that given by the Indians.

The Platte River, nearly three-quarters of a century ago, was called by Washington Irving, "The most magnificent and most useless of streams. Abstraction made of its defects, nothing can be more pleasing than the perspective which it presents to the eye. Its islands have the appearance of a labyrinth of groves floating on the waters. Their extraordinary position gives an air of youth and loveliness to the whole scene. If to this be added the undulations of the river, the waving of the verdure, the alternations of light and shade, the succession of these islands varying in form and beauty, and the purity of the atmosphere, some idea may be formed of the pleasing sensations which the traveller experiences on beholding a scene that seems to have started fresh from the hands of the Creator."

The valley is wide, and once was covered with luxuriant grass and dotted with many-coloured flowers. For a great distance along its lower portions, the banks were fringed with a heavy growth of cottonwood, willow, and other varieties of timber.

In its solitude at the beginning of the present century, it might properly be claimed as the arena of the tornado and the race course of the winds. Climatic changes, which follow the empire of the plough, have dissipated such atmospheric phenomena as characterized the vast wilderness in its days of absolute isolation from the march of civilization, as they have elsewhere in the central regions of the continent.

The revered Father De Smet, who traversed the then dreary wilderness of the Platte Valley, as long ago as fifty-seven years, thus writes in his letters to the bishop of St. Louis, of a tornado he witnessed: —

"However, it happens sometimes, though but seldom, that the clouds, floating with great rapidity, open currents of air so violent as suddenly to chill the atmosphere and produce the most destructive hailstorms. I have seen some hailstones the size of an egg. It is dangerous to be abroad during these storms. A Cheyenne Indian was lately struck by a hailstone, and remained senseless for an hour.

"Once as the storm raged near us, we witnessed a sublime sight. A spiral abyss seemed to be suddenly formed in the air. The clouds followed each other into it with great velocity, till they attracted all objects around them, whilst such clouds as were too large and too far distant to feel its influence turned in an opposite direction. The noise we heard in the air was like that of a tempest. On beholding the conflict, we fancied that all the winds had been let loose from the four points of the compass. It is very probable that if it had approached nearer, the whole caravan would have made an ascension into the clouds. The spiral column moved majestically toward the north, and lighted on the surface of the Platte. Then another scene was exhibited to view. The waters, agitated by its powerful function, began to turn round with frightful noise, and were suddenly drawn up to the clouds in a spiral form. The column appeared to measure a mile in height; and such was the violence of the winds, which came down in a perpendicular direction, that in the twinkling of an eye the trees were torn and uprooted, and their boughs scattered in every direction. But what is violent does not last. After a few minutes the frightful visitation ceased. The column, not being able to sustain the weight at its base, was dissolved almost as quickly as it had been formed.

"In proportion as we proceeded toward the source of this wonderful river, the shades of vegetation became more gloomy, and the brows of the mountain more craggy. Everything seemed to wear the aspect not of decay, but of age, or rather of venerable antiquity."

The broad old Salt Lake Trail to the Rocky Mountains coincided with the Platte River about twenty miles below the head of Grand Island. The island used to be densely wooded, and extended for sixty or seventy miles. The valley at that point is about seven miles wide, and the stream itself, between one and two from bank to bank.

The South Platte was a muddy stream, and with its low banks, scattered flat sand-bars, and pigmy islands, a melancholy river, straggling through the centre of vast prairies, and only saved from being impossible to find with the naked eye by its sentinel trees standing at long distances from each other, on either side.

The Platte of the mountain region scarcely retains one characteristic of the stream far below. Here, it is confined to a bed of rock and sand, not more than two hundred yards wide, and its water is of unwonted clearness and transparency. Its banks are steep and the attrition caused at the time of spring freshets shows a deep vegetable mould reaching far back, making the soil highly fertile. Here, too, the river forces its way through a barrier of tablelands, forming one of those striking peculiarities incident to mountain streams, called by the Spaniards a cañon; that is, a narrow passage between high and precipitous banks, formed by mountains; a common term in the language of the mountaineers describing one of these picturesque breaks through the range.

The scenery of the upper Platte is constantly changing, the river presenting more the appearance of a genuine mountain stream. Its banks are here and there heavily fringed with timber, rich grass grows luxuriantly in the flat bottoms, and the dark bluffs which bound them form a beautiful background, interspersed occasionally by snow-capped peaks.

In little more than the third of a century the vast area of desert-waste comprising the valley of the Platte, and beyond, has been transmuted by that most effective of civilizers the railroad, into great states. On the terra incognita there have appeared large cities and towns, whose genesis is a marvel in the history of nations. Peace has spread her white wings over the bloody sands of the trail, whose sublime silence but a short time since was so often broken by the diabolical whoop of the savage, as he wrenched the reeking scalp from the head of his enemy. Where it required many weeks of dangerous, tedious travel to cross the weary pathway to the mountains, now, in all the luxuriance of modern American railway service, the traveller is whirled along at the rate of fifty miles an hour, and where it required many days for the transmission of news, the events of the whole civilized world, as they hourly occur, are flashed from ocean to ocean in a few seconds.

The islands, bluffs, and isolated peaks of the trail have clustering around them many thrilling legends, stories, and events; some of them reaching far backward into the dim light of tradition; others having happened within the memory of men now living. All are strangely characteristic of the region, and are as full of poetry and pathos as the epics of ancient Greece, whose stories are the basis of the literature of the world to-day.

Some traveller, who has visited every picturesque spot on both continents, has truthfully said: "No! Never need an American look beyond his own country for the sublime and beautiful of natural scenery." Nowhere else on the continent is the landscape for such a distance so varied, so distinctly picturesque, beautiful, and sublime, as that which may be viewed from the car windows of the magnificent trains of the Union Pacific Railway. They swiftly course over almost the identical pathway once followed by the overland stage-coach, the pony express, and the slowly plodding ox caravans in the days when the possibility of a transcontinental trail of steel was regarded as a chimera.

Less than a hundred miles from the Missouri River is the famous Loup Fork of the Platte, once celebrated for the great Pawnee Indian village on its south bank, where, long before the white man encroached upon the beautiful region, that once powerful tribe lived in a sort of barbaric splendour. This affluent was so named by the early French-Canadian trappers because of the numerous packs of wolves that haunted the region. Game, consisting of deer, buffalo, antelope, turkeys, and prairie chickens, abounded, while the stream itself was covered with ducks and geese. During the days of travel by the old trail, at the crossing-place was a primitive ferry. The current was always very strong, and when the fork was much swollen, dangerous. The region watered by the Loup Fork is unsurpassed in fertility by any other portion of the valley of the Platte. After crossing the stream, the Union Pacific's track is a perfectly straight line, and when the fields are golden with the harvests, the view from the train is the most marvellous agricultural landscape to be found anywhere on the continent.

A few miles westward, beyond Grand Island, is Wood River, a noted landmark and camping-place for those who followed the tide of immigration to Utah, and to the gold fields of California, in 1849. It was always a pleasant spot, and is now a station on the Union Pacific Railway. As the tourist crosses the bridge over the stream in a palace car, he may look down from his window, and meditate on the brilliancy of the present, and the misty past, with all its adventures and suffering. The march of civilization has made wonderful changes in fifty years. It has forced the Indians, the buffaloes, and the antelopes away from the prairies, and in their places comfortable homes may now be seen on the sites of old camps. The pretty little stream still runs its race to the Platte, and lingering near the bank at the old ford, murmurs its story of the long ago, as the train rushes by.

After passing Grand Island, the next place of importance between the flourishing town of Columbus and North Platte is that known as Brady's.

Brady's Island honours the memory of an old-time trapper, who was brutally murdered by one of his partners in 1847. They were engaged in their vocation as employees of the American Fur Company, on the many tributaries of the Platte, and their camp at the time was on the island that bears the unfortunate man's name. The tradition says that the little coterie of trappers had landed there to pack their accumulation of the season's furs for the market of St. Louis, then the only place where they could be disposed of in the whole West.

The day when everything was about ready for embarkation down the river to the Missouri, in a rude boat which they had constructed of buffalo-hides drawn over a framework of poles, Brady and one of the men were in the camp alone — the others were at work on the bank of the stream. Brady and the one who was left in the camp that morning were ever on bad terms with each other, and more than once had indulged in some severe quarrels.

When the rest of their party returned to the camp preparatory to starting, they found Brady dead, lying in a pool of his own blood. His partner, when questioned as to the cause of his death, affirmed that he was accidentally killed by the premature discharge of his own rifle, which he had been carelessly handling.

The story was not believed by the men, and the cold-blooded murderer escaped lynching by his companions only by the better judgment of the cooler heads of some, who insisted that possibly the tale might be true. The body of the unlucky trapper was buried near the spot where he fell, but was soon dug up by the wolves, and his bones left to bleach in the wintry sun. Portions of them were found eight or ten years afterward by another party of trappers, and when they recognized them as those of a human being, they carefully reinterred them.

The party of trappers, sad at the loss of one of their number, started down the Platte, with their boat-load of furs, but finding the river too shallow to navigate their frail craft, they were compelled to abandon it. They themselves carried what they could of its contents and made the best of their way on foot, two hundred and fifty miles, to the nearest settlement. In a few days their provisions began to run short, and as game became scarce, they separated, after making about one hundred miles of their lonesome journey, each man taking his own trail toward the Missouri. The murderer of Brady happened to be a very indifferent walker, and was soon left many miles behind his comrades.

When the foremost of the party arrived at the Pawnee village, on the Loup Fork of the Platte, they sent back two members of that tribe to bring in the lost man, while they continued on their journey toward the Missouri. A week or more later a small party of trappers belonging to the same fur company, happening to go near the Indian village, were stopped by the head chief, who requested them to go with him, to see a white man who was lying very sick in his teepee.

They complied with the Indian's request, and found the murderer of Brady at the point of death. He confessed to them how Brady came to his end; told of his own sufferings, and believed them to be the justice that was dealt out to him for the unwarranted killing of his partner. He told them, further, that when his companions left him on the road, he had tried to light a fire at night with his pistol, and the charge accidentally entered his thigh bone, tearing it into splinters. In that deplorable condition he was absolutely helpless; to walk was an impossibility. He could hardly move at all, far less dress his wound properly. He managed, by tying a piece of cloth to a stick, to let any passing trapper know where he was lying. He remained there for six days and nights, when at last his ear caught the sound of human voices, and waking up from the stupor which had overcome him from his weakness, to his great delight he discovered two friendly Pawnees leaning over him, their countenances filled with compassion. They gave him some nourishment, tenderly conveyed him to their village, and had kindly cared for him ever since.

He expired while the trappers were conversing with him.

One of the historic places on the left bank of the North Fork of the Platte is Ash Hollow,[1] twelve miles distant from the main stream, famous for a battle between Little Thunder, chief of the Brule Sioux, and the Second Regiment of United States Dragoons, under command of Brevet Brigadier William S. Harney; in which some eighty Indians were slain, and the lives of twelve of our own soldiers lost.

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[1] Near the station of Ogallala, on the Union Pacific Railroad.

Johnson's Creek was named for a foolish missionary a great many years ago, who was on his way to Oregon, in company with a party of emigrants in charge of John Gray.

As they were breaking camp one morning, a band of Sioux suddenly charged out of the hills, and preparations were immediately made by Mr. Gray and his men to repel them. Against such a course as this Mr. Johnson loudly protested. He declared that it would be a terrible outrage to shed innocent blood, and as the savages neared the camp, he marched out to meet them and have a talk, notwithstanding that he was told by his companions that the Indians would not listen to him for a moment, but would take his scalp.

The deluded fool really believed that the savages would not harm him, because he was a missionary, and had ventured out among them to do their race good. Of course he fell a victim to his own ridiculous credulity; for the moment the Indians came close enough, they incontinently murdered him, and his hair was dangling at the belt of one of the warriors before Johnson had a chance to put in a word.

In the fight which ensued three of the Indians were killed, and were, with the mangled remains of the unfortunate missionary, buried in one grave.

Independence Rock is an isolated mass of clear granite, located a few hundred yards from the right bank of the Sweetwater. Its base covers an area of nearly five acres, and rises to a height of about three hundred feet. There is a slight depression on its summit, otherwise the rock would be nearly oval in shape. In the early days of the trail, a little soil, which had probably been drifted into the depression mentioned, supported a few sickly shrubs and one dwarf tree.

The front face of this ancient landmark, like that of Pawnee Rock, on the old Santa Fé Trail, is covered with the names of trappers, traders, emigrants, and other men who supposed that their rude carvings would immortalize them.

The rock derives its patriotic name from the fact that many years ago one of the first party of Americans who crossed the continent by the way of the Platte Valley, under the leadership of a man named Thorp, celebrated their Fourth of July at the foot of the now historic mass of granite.

Independence Rock

The most prominent inscription on the face of the rock is Independence. Father De Smet, the celebrated Jesuit priest, says of it in his letters to the bishop of St. Louis, in 1841: "The first rock which we saw, and which truly deserves the name, was the famous rock Independence. At first I was led to believe that it had received this pompous name from its isolated situation and the solidity of its basis; but I was afterward told that it was called so because the first travellers who thought of giving it a name arrived at it on the very day when the people of the United States celebrate the anniversary of their separation from Great Britain. We reached this spot on the day that immediately succeeds this celebration. We had in our company a young Englishman, as jealous of the honour of his nation as the Americans; hence we had a double reason not to cry hurrah, for Independence. Still, on the following day, lest it might be said that we passed this lofty monument of the desert with indifference, we cut our names on the south side of the rock, under initials (I. H. S.) which we would wish to see engraved on every spot. On account of all these names, and of the dates that accompany them, as well as of the hieroglyphics of Indian warriors, I have surnamed this rock 'The Great Record of the Desert.'"

As is the case with nearly all of the prominent bluffs, mountains, and isolated peaks in the romantic valley, Independence Rock has its Indian legend. The story as told by an old warrior is this: —

"A great many years ago, long before any white man had looked upon the valley of the Upper Platte, the chief of the Pawnees, whose big villages extended for some distance along that river, was known as the Crouching Panther. He was one of the bravest warriors that the famous Pawnee nation had ever produced; large in stature, powerful in his strength, yet as lithe and quick as the animal from which he derived his name. He was beloved by his tribe, and none of his many warriors could compete with him for an instant in all the manly games which afford the amusements of the savages, nor with him in the chase after the buffalo or the more fleet antelope. His prowess, too, in battle was far beyond that of any of the great warriors which tradition had handed down; yet he was not envied by any, for he was of a loving and kind disposition. He was equal in feats of horsemanship to the Comanches, which nation excels in that particular over all other Plains tribes.

"In the village there lived a superannuated chief, who possessed a daughter considered the handsomest maiden in all the region which was watered by the great Platte. She was as graceful as an antelope in all her movements, and, as is usual in the strange nomenclature of the savages who take their cognomens from some characteristic of their nature, she was known as the Antelope, because she more resembled that graceful animal than any other of the young maidens in her tribe. She would flit from rock to rock, when out gathering berries, or float down the stream in her birch-bark canoe, catching fish for her aged father's meals. Crouching Panther had for a long time had his eyes riveted upon the Antelope, and would often lie for hours on some high point of rock watching the youthful girl as she attended to the cares of her lodge. He never returned from a successful hunt without sending some choice portion of the buffalo or other animal he had killed to the lodge of the Antelope.

"The arrangements, according to the customs of the tribe, had already been made for a wedding of the favourite young savages, when on the night preceding the ceremony a party of Sioux, the deadly hereditary enemies of the Pawnees, made a night assault upon the village, and after a terrible fight carried off a number of scalps, and many prisoners, among whom was the Antelope.

"The prisoners were hurried off to one of the remote fastnesses of the Sioux up in the mountains, in the vicinity of Medicine Bow River, where, as was the custom of the Indians, they intended to sacrifice their prisoners by the worst methods of torture as ingeniously cruel as they could possibly make it.

"In two days after the return of the warriors to the Sioux village was the sacrifice to be made. The friends and relatives of the Sioux who had been killed in the assault upon the Pawnees were drawn up around the unfortunate captives, who were about to be fastened to stakes and stand the terrible ordeal of death by fire, when suddenly, like a clap of thunder out of a clear sky, the terrible war-whoop of the Pawnees sounded in the ears of the now thoroughly frightened Sioux, who saw, to their dismay, a band of the dreaded Pawnees led by the intrepid Crouching Panther. Dashing down upon them, they fought their way to where the prisoners were already stoically awaiting their terrible fate, and the Crouching Panther, rushing to where the Antelope was standing, after killing half a dozen of his foes, caught her up, and throwing her before him on his saddle, dashed off with his brave little band of followers before the astonished Sioux could recover. It was not long before they recovered their presence of mind, however, and, enraged by the loss of their prisoners, immediately mounted their horses and quickly followed the daring Pawnees on the trail.

"The Sioux outnumbered the Pawnees ten to one, but Crouching Panther had just that amount of courage in his nature that numbers did not stop him when bent on such a mission, and he had proceeded a great way on the trail with his warriors and the Antelope toward their native village when they were overtaken by a vastly superior force, and a terrible fight took place. Many a Sioux did the Crouching Panther send to the happy hunting-grounds, notwithstanding that he was handicapped by the living burden in front of him on his horse. He was near the rock, when he found that all his warriors, though having fought bravely, were cut down, and himself alone, death staring him in the face, or what was worse, the torture for himself and the girl with him. He jumped from his animal with the now fainting maiden in his arms, and, rushing up the mountain, followed by a dozen of his foes, sprang to the edge of the dizzy height, and stood for a moment confronting his enemies. The sun was just setting; the valley was flooded with a golden light, and he stood there with the Antelope in his arms at bay for a moment, gazing in disdain upon his pursuers. As one of the Sioux was foremost in his attempt to seize the Crouching Panther, the latter hurled his hatchet with terrible, unerring force, and buried it deep into the presumptuous savage's brain. At the same moment crying out 'The spirits of a hundred Pawnee braves will accompany their great chief to the happy hunting-grounds of their fathers,' he pressed close to his bosom the beautiful form of the Antelope, sprang out into the clear air, and bounding from rock to rock, the two lovers were dashed to pieces on the stony ground below."

Chimney Rock, on the Platte, was once a famous landmark in the early days of the trail. When he reached it, the pioneer traveller knew that nearly one-half of the journey from the Missouri River and the Great Salt Lake was over. For miles on either side of it, it was plainly visible to the lonely trapper, the hunter, and the western-bound emigrant.

Erosion has worn it to an insignificant pillar, but it at one time was a portion of the main chain of bluffs bounding the valley of the Platte. Denudation through countless ages separated it from them. Fifty years ago it was a conical elevation, about a hundred feet high, from the apex of which another shaft arose forty feet. Its strange formation was caused by disintegration of the softer portions of its mass. It is located on the south side of the river, not far from the boundary line between Nebraska and Wyoming. It looked like a factory chimney, hence its name.

The origin of "Crazy Woman's Creek," according to a legend of the Crows, told by an aged chief to George P. Belden, is as follows: —

"Years ago, when my father was a little boy, there came among us a man who was half white. He said he wished to trade with our people for buffalo-robes, beaver, elk, and deerskins, and that he would give us much paint, and many blankets and pieces of cloth in exchange for furs. We liked him, and believed him very good, for he was rich, having many thousands of beads and hundreds of yards of ribbons. Our village was then built on the river, about twenty miles above where we now are, and game was very plentiful. This river did not at that time have the name of Crazy Woman, but was called Big Beard, because a curious grass grows along its banks that has a big beard. What I am about to relate caused the name of the river to be changed.

"The trader built a lodge of wood and stones, and near it a great, strong house, in which he kept all his immense wealth. It was not long until he had bought all the robes and furs for sale in the village, and then he packed them on ponies, and bidding us good-by, said he was going far to the east where the paleface lives, but that he would soon come back, bring us many presents and plenty of blankets, beads, and ribbons, which he would exchange as before for robes and furs. We were sorry to see him go, but, as he promised to return in a few moons, we were much consoled. It was not long until our spies reported something they could not understand coming into our country, and the whole village was in a great state of alarm. Some of the boldest ventured out, and returned with the joyful intelligence that the strange objects our young men had seen was the trader and his people. All the village ran to meet him, and the sight was strange enough indeed. The Crows had in those days never seen a wagon, horse, or ox, and the trader had brought all these things. The wagons they called teepees on rollers; the horses were giants beside the little ponies, and the oxen, all believed were tame buffaloes. There, also, was a squaw, who was perfectly white, and who could not understand anything that was said to her. She wore dresses down to her feet, of which she seemed to be ashamed, and our women said she tied cords tightly about her waist, so as to make it small. She had very long hair, and did not plait but rolled it, and, instead of letting it hang down, wrapped it tightly about her head.

"It was not long until the trader had all his wagons unloaded and his store open. He had brought all the women beads and ribbons, and the men brass rings. Besides what he sold, he made many presents; so everybody loved him, for no one had ever before seen so rich and generous a man.

"One day he told the Big Chief to come into the back part of the store and he would show him something wonderful. The chief went, wondering what it could be, and when they were alone, the trader drew out a very little barrel and, taking a wooden cup, poured out some black-looking water, which he told the chief to drink. The chief did as desired and immediately felt so jolly he asked for more. The trader promised, if he would never tell any one where he got the black water, he would give him all he wanted. The chief promised, and the trader gave him another cupful. Now the chief danced and sang, and went to his lodge, where he fell down in a deep sleep, and no one could wake him. He slept so long the warriors gathered about the lodge wondering what could ail him, and they were about to go to the trader and demand to know what kind of medicine he had given the chief to make him behave so strangely when the chief woke up and ordered them all to their lodges, and to ask no questions.

"Next day the chief went to the trader and said he had had great dreams; that he thought he had slain many of his enemies, and that the black medicine must be very good to make him have such pleasant visions. He begged the trader to give him some more, and he did so. Thus the chief did every day, and all the village wondered; for they believed the trader had bewitched him. In former times the chief had been a very quiet and dignified man, but now he sang, danced in the streets, and publicly hugged the women, so every one thought him crazy. The Crows disliked the conduct of their chief very much, and began to grumble against the trader; for they thought he was to blame for the great change that had come over their chief. Some said he was bewitched, others that the trader had an evil spirit in one of his boxes, and thus they talked, some believing one thing, and some another, but all blaming him. One of the young warriors called a secret council, and the matter was discussed, and it was finally decided that the trader must leave or they would put him to death. A warrior, who was a great friend of the trader, was sent to tell him of the decision of the council, and when he did so, the trader laughed and said if he would come into the back of the store, and never tell anybody, he would show him what ailed the chief. The warrior went, and the trader gave him a ladleful of the black water to drink. Presently he began to sing and dance about, and then went out into the street and sang, which greatly surprised every one, for he had never done so before. The young men gathered about him and asked him what ailed him, but he only said, 'Oh, go to the trader and get some of the black water!' So they went to the trader and inquired what kind of black water he had that affected people so strangely; and the trader told them he had only the same kind of water they drank, and brought out his pail, that they all might drink. Each warrior took up the ladle and drank some, and made the trader drink some, and then they sat down to wait and see if it would affect them like the chief and their brother-warrior; but it did not, and they rose up and said, 'The trader or our brother lies, and we will see who is the liar.' They went to the warrior's lodge and found him sound asleep, nor could they wake him. Two remained to watch by him, and the others went to their teepees. When the sun was up, the warriors rose, and, seeing the others sitting in his tent, said, 'Why are you here, my brothers?' And the eldest of the two warriors replied, 'You have lied to us, for the trader has no black water.' The warrior, recollecting his promise not to tell, said, 'It is true that the trader has no black water, and who said he had?' They explained to him his conduct of the day before, at which he was greatly astonished, and he declared if such was the case he must have been very sick in his head and not known what he said. Thereupon the warriors withdrew and reported all to their brethren. The warriors were greatly perplexed, and knew not what to do or think, but decided to wait and see.

"The chief and warrior were now drunk every day, and the young chief called another council. It was long and stormy in its debate, all the wise men speaking, but no one giving such counsel as the others would accept. At last a young warrior rose and said that he had watched, and that it was true that the trader had a black water which he gave the chief and warrior to drink; for he had made a hole in the wall of the trader's store and through it saw them drinking the black water. He advised them to bring the trader and warrior before them, and he would accuse them to their face of what he had seen, and if they denied the truth he would fight them.

"This speech was received with great satisfaction, and the young chief at once sent some warriors to fetch the trader and their brother.

"When they were come into the council and seated, the young warrior repeated all he had said, and asked if it were not true that they would fight him.

"The warrior who was first asked rose up and said the young warrior lied, and that he was ready to fight him; but when the trader was told to stand up and answer, he, seeing there was no use in denying the matter, confessed all. He said the black water was given him by the white people, a great many of whom drank it, and it made them behave as they had seen the chief and the warrior do. He also told them that after a man drank of it he felt happy, laughed and sang, and when he lay down he dreamed pleasant dreams and slew his enemies.

"The curiosity of the warriors was greatly excited and the young chief bade the trader go and bring some of his black water, that they might taste it. He was about to depart when the young warrior who had before spoken rose and desired him to be seated, when he said: 'The warriors heard my speech, and it was good. The brother, however, when I asked him if he would tell the council the truth, said I lied, and he would fight me. Let us now go out of the village and fight.'

"The young chief asked the drunkard if he had anything to say, when he rose and addressed the council as follows: —

"'Oh, my brethren, it is true that I have drunk of the black water, and that I have lied. When the trader first gave it to me to drink, he made me promise that I would never tell what it was, or where I got it, and he has many times since said if I told any one he would never give me any more to drink. Oh, my brethren, the black water is most wonderful, and I have come to love it better than my life, or the truth. The fear of never having any more of it to drink made me lie, and I have nothing more to say but that I am ready to fight.'

"Then the council adjourned, and every one went out to see the warriors fight. They were both men of great skill and bravery, and the whole village came to see the battle. He who drank the black water was the best spearsman in the tribe, and every one expected to see the other warrior killed.

"The spears were brought, and when they were given to the combatants it was seen that the hand of him who had lied shook so he could hardly hold his spear. At this his friends rallied him, and asked him if he was afraid. He replied that his heart was brave, but that his hand trembled, though not with fear, for it had shook so for many days.

"Then the battle began, and at the second throw of the spears he with the trembling hand was clove through the heart, and killed instantly, while the other warrior did not receive a wound.

"After the fight was over, the warriors all went to the trader's lodge, and he brought in a pail more than a quart of the black water, which he gave in small quantities to each warrior. When they had swallowed it, they began to dance and sing, and many lay down on the ground and slept as though they were dead. Next day they came again and asked for more black water; and so they came each day, dancing and singing, for more than a week.

"One morning the trader said he would give them no more black water unless they paid him for it, and this they did. The price was at first one robe for each sup sufficient to make them sleep, but, as the black water became scarce, two robes, and finally three were paid for a sleep. Then the trader said he had no more except a little for himself, and this he would not sell; but the warriors begged so hard for some he gave them a sleep for many robes. Even the body-robes were soon in the hands of the trader, and the warriors were very poor, but still they begged for more black water, giving a pony in exchange for each sleep. The trader took all the ponies, and then the warriors offered their squaws, but there was no more black water, and the trader said he would go and fetch some.

"He packed all the robes on the ponies and was about to set out, when a warrior made a speech, saying that now that he had all their robes and ponies, and they were very poor, the trader was going away and would never return, for they had nothing more to give him. So the warriors said he should not depart, and ordered him to unpack the ponies. The trader told them he would soon return with plenty of black water, and give it to them as he did at first. Many of the warriors were willing that he should depart, but others said no, and one declared that he had plenty of black water still left and was going off to trade with their enemies, the Sioux. This created great excitement, and the trader's store and all his packs were searched, but no black water found. Still the warriors asserted that he had it, and that it was hidden away. The warriors declared that they would kill him unless he instantly told them where he had hid it, and upon his not being able to do so, they rushed into his lodge and murdered him before the eyes of his squaw, tearing off his scalp and stamping upon his body. This so alarmed the white squaw that she attempted to run out of the lodge, and, as she came to the door, a warrior struck her on the head with his tomahawk and she fell down as though she were dead.

"The chief made a great speech, saying that now, as the trader was dead, they would burn his lodge and take back all their robes and ponies. So the lodge was fired, and as it burned a Crow squaw saw by its light the white squaw lying before the door, and that she was not dead, and she took her to her lodge, sewed up her wounds, and gave her something to eat. The squaw lived and got well, but she was crazy and could not bear the sight of a warrior, believing that every one who came near her was going to kill her.

"One day the white squaw was missing, and the whole village turned out to look for her. They followed her tracks far down the river, but could not find her. Some women out gathering berries a few days afterward said the white squaw came to them and asked for food, showing them at the same time where she was hiding in the bluffs near by. She begged them not to tell the warriors where she was, or they would come and kill her. The squaws tried to dissuade her from a notion so foolish, but they could not get her to return to the village.

"Every day the squaws went and took her food, and she lived for many months, no one knowing where she was but the women. When the warriors came about she hid away, and would not stir out until they were gone. One day, however, a warrior out hunting antelope came suddenly upon her and she fled away, but he followed her, wishing to bring her to the village. All day she ran over the hills, and at night the warrior came back, being unable to catch her. She was never seen again, and what became of her is not known, although it is likely she died of hunger, or that the wild beasts destroyed her.

"Ever after, when the Indians came here to camp, they told the story of the crazy woman, and the place became known as the 'place of the crazy woman,' and the name of Big Beard was almost entirely forgotten."

Laramie Plains present a broad bottom on both sides of the river, comprising about twelve hundred square miles, bounded on the north and east by the Black Hills, on the south by a "divide" of arenaceous rock, embedded in marl and white clay, almost barren of verdure, while on the west are the beautiful Medicine Bow Mountains. The southern portion of these plains is watered by a succession of streams which rise in the mountains, some of them discharging their volume into the Laramie River, others sinking in the sand — a characteristic of many creeks and so-called rivers of the central region of the continent.

The northern portion of these vast prairies is a high tableland, devoid of water, its soil mixed with clay and sand, but producing the grass peculiar to the other plains region. Toward the southeastern extremity, at the foot of an isolated mountain, is a salt lake of considerable dimensions; several other sheets of water are also to be seen in the vicinity of the Medicine Bow Mountains, all of which are strongly impregnated with mineral salts. The Laramie River traces its course through the whole extent, rising in the southern extremity of the Medicine Bow Mountains, and empties into the North Platte, at Fort Laramie.

Laramie Peak was the guiding hill that emigrants first saw of the far-famed western mountains, — especially its snow-covered crest, a veritable beacon, its summit glistening in the morning sun as its rays fell upon it, the majestic hill ever pointing out the direction which the earnest pilgrims should travel.

The existence of a large lake of salt water somewhere amid the wilds west of the Rocky Mountains seems to have been vaguely known as long ago as two hundred years. As early as May, 1689, the Baron La Hontan,[1] lord-lieutenant of the French colony at Placentia, in New Foundland, wrote an account of discoveries in this region, which was published in the English language in 1735.

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[1] The unfrocked monk, Geudeville, who travelled extensively in Canada, and published in London, in 1703, his *New Voyages to North America*, under the nom de plume of Baron La Hontan. It is doubted how far this jolly soldier and *bon vivant* travelled west. He had served at various points in the interior, and leaves no reason to doubt his presence, at various times, at what was Fort Gratiot, Michilimackinac, Green Bay, and other points in the region of the Upper Lakes. It is the opinion of the historians, however, that he went no farther than Green Bay. There can be but little question of the character of the fiction he attempted to

In the letter, which is dated at "Missilimakinac," he gives "an account of the author's departure from and return to Missilimakinac; a description of the Bay of Puants and its villages; an ample description of the beavers, followed by the journal of a remarkable voyage upon Long River, and a map of the adjacent country.

"Leaving Mackinaw, he passed into Green Bay, which he calls 'the Bay of Pouteoutamois,' and arrived at the mouth of Fox River, which he describes as 'a little, deep sort of a river, which disembogues at a place where the water of the lake swells three feet high in twelve hours, and decreases as much in the same compass of time.'

"The villages of the Sakis, Pouteouatamis, and some Malominis are seated on the side of that river, and the Jesuits have a house, or college, built upon it. Ascending the Fox River, called 'the river of Puants,' he came to a village of Kikapous, which stands on the brink of a little lake, in which the savages fish great quantities of pikes and gudgeons. [Lake Winnebago?]

"Still ascending the river, he passed through the 'little lake of the Malominis,' the sides of which 'are covered with a sort of oats, which grow in tufts, with a small stalk, and of which the savages reap plentiful crops,' and at length arrived at the land carriage of Ouisconsinc, which 'we finished in two days; that is, we left the river

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palm off on his readers. His work is a literary curiosity, unexcelled in bibliography, for its bold assumption in attempting to impose on a credulous age a tale of fancied adventures and fictitious observation. He was a veritable Baron Munchausen.

Puants, and transported our canoes and baggage to the river Ouisconsinc, which is not above three-quarters of a league distant, or thereabouts.' Descending the Wisconsin, in four days he reached its mouth, and landed on an island in the river Mississippi.

"So far, the journey of the Baron La Hontan is plain enough; but beyond this point it is rather apocryphal. He states that he ascended the Mississippi for nine days, when he 'entered the mouth of the Long River, which looks like a lake full of bulrushes.' He sailed up this river for six weeks, passing through various nations of savages, of which a most fanciful description is given. At length, determined by the advance of the season, he abandoned the intention of reaching the head of the river, and returned to Canada, having at the termination of his voyage first 'fixed a long pole, with the arms of France done upon a plate of lead.' The following is his description of the 'Long River': 'You must know that the stream of the Long River is all along very slack and easy, abating for about three leagues between the fourteenth and fifteenth villages; for there, indeed, its current may be called rapid. The channel is so straight that it scarce winds at all from the head of the lake. 'Tis true 'tis not very pleasant, for most of its banks have a dismal prospect, and the water itself has an ugly taste; but then its usefulness atones for such inconveniences, for 'tis navigable with the greatest ease, and will bear barks of fifty tons, till you come to that place which is marked with a *flower-de-luce* in the map, and where I put up the post that my soldiers christened *La Hontan's Limit.*'

"A detailed map accompanies this imaginative voyage up this most imaginary river. It is represented as flowing east through twenty-five degrees of longitude, numerous streams putting into it on either side, with mountains, islands, villages, and domains of Indian tribes, whose very names have at this day sunk into oblivion. The map was afterward published, in 1710, by John Senex, F.R.S., as a part of North America, corrected from the observations communicated to the Royal Society at London and the Royal Academy at Paris.

"This discovery of Baron La Hontan excited, even at that early day, the spirit of enterprise and speculation which has proved so marked a feature in the national character. In a work published in 1772, and entitled 'A description of the Province of Carolina, by the Spaniards called Florida, and by the French La Louisiane, by Daniel Cox,' the then proprietary, the first part of the fifth chapter is devoted to 'A new and curious discovery and relation of an easy communication between the river Meschacebe (Mississippi) and the South Sea, which separates America from China, by means of several large rivers and lakes."

The existence of the Great Salt Lake of Utah was known to the early Spanish voyageurs under the intrepid Coronado, through stories told them by the Indians, but there is no trustworthy account of any of them having seen it. To Jim Bridger, the famous mountaineer and scout, must be accorded the honour of having been the first white man to look upon its brackish waters. He discovered it in the winter of 1824–25, accidentally, in deciding a bet. The story of this visit to the Great Salt Lake comes down to us by the most reliable testimony. It appears that a party of trappers, under the command of William H. Ashley, one day found themselves on Bear River, in what is known as Willow Valley, and while lying in camp a discussion arose in relation to the probable course of the river. A wager was made, and Bridger sent out to determine the question. He paddled a long distance and came out on the Great Salt Lake, whose water he tasted and found it salt. Having made the discovery as to where the Bear River emptied, he retraced his lonely journey and reported the result to his companions.

Upon his report of the vast dimensions of the strange inland body of salt water, they all became anxious to learn whether other streams did not flow into the lake, and if so, there were new fields in which to try their luck in trapping beaver. To learn the fact four of them constructed boats of skins, and paddling into the lake, explored it.

Of course, it cannot be clearly proven that Old Jim Bridger was the first white man who saw the Great Salt Lake, but all others who have made claim to its discovery have not satisfied the demands of truth in their particulars, so the honour must and does rest upon Bridger; for no more authentic account of its discovery can be found. His statement is corroborated by such men as Robert Campbell, of St. Louis, and other famous mountaineers of the time.

There is a pretty piece of fiction connected with one of the claimants to its discovery, by the celebrated Jim Beckwourth, that famous Afro-American, who was chief of the Crow Nation. It says: "One day in June, 1822, a beautiful Indian maiden offered him a pair of moccasins if he would procure for her an antelope skin, and bring the animal's brains with it, in order that she might dress a deerskin. Beckwourth started out in his mission, but failed to see any antelope. He did see an Indian coming toward him, whose brains he proposed to himself to take to the savage maiden after he had killed the buck, believing that she would never discover the difference, and had pulled up his rifle to fire when he happily saw that his supposed savage was William H. Ashley, of the American Fur Company, and who told him that he had sailed through Green River into the Great Salt Lake."

It may be true that Ashley did sail upon the Great Salt Lake before Bridger; but the story lacks confirmation; it has not that reliable endorsement which Bridger's claim possesses.

Jedediah Smith, another of the famous coterie of old trappers, called the lake Utah, and the river which flows into it from the south after the celebrated Ashley.

Much has been given to the world in relation to the vicinity of the Great Salt Lake and the contiguous part of Utah by the famous author, Washington Irving, in his adventures of Captain Bonneville, but it should be taken *cum grano salis;* for, as Bancroft truthfully observes: "Irving humoured the captain, whose vanity prompted him to give his own name to the lake, although he had not a shadow of title to that distinction. Yet on Bonneville's map of the region, the lake is plainly lettered 'Bonneville's Lake.'

"Many old maps, dating from 1795 to 1826, have laid down upon them an inland sea, or lake, together with many other strange rivers and creeks, which never had any existence except in the minds of their progenitors, taken from the legendary tales of the old trappers, who in turn got them from the savages.

"The early emigrants to Oregon and California did not travel within many miles of the Great Salt Lake, so but very scanty reports are to be found in relation to the country. General Fremont, too, like a great many explorers, got puffed up with his own importance, and when, on the 6th of September, 1846, he saw for the first time the Great Salt Lake, he compares himself to Balboa, when that famous Spaniard gazed upon the Pacific. Fremont, too, says that he was the first to sail upon its saline waters, but again, as in many of his statements, he commits an unpardonable error; for Bridger's truthful story of the old trappers who explored it in search of streams flowing into it, in the hopes of enlarging their field of beaver trapping, antedates Fremont's many years."[1]

Captain Stansbury, of the United States army, made the first survey of the lake in 1849–50. Stansbury Island was named after him; Gunnison Island after Lieutenant Gunnison, of his command; Fremont's Island, after that explorer, who first saw it in 1843, and called it Disappointment Island.

Members of Captain Bonneville's company first looked upon the lake from near the mouth of the Ogden River, in 1833. His name has been given to a great fossil lake, whose shore line may now be seen throughout the neighbouring valleys, and of which the Great Salt Lake is but the bitter fragment.

The outlet to this vast ancient body of water has been shown by Professor Gilbert to have been at a place now called Red Rock Pass.

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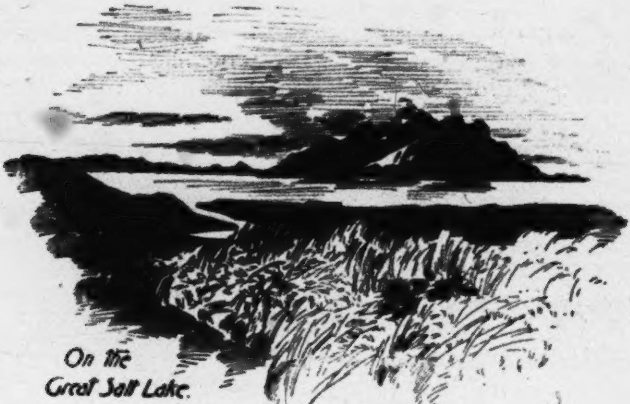
[1] Bancroft.



On the Great Salt Lake.

CHAPTER XI

THE INDIAN TRIBES OF THE SALT LAKE TRAIL — THE OTOES — I-E-TAN — BLUE-EYES SHOT BY I-E-TAN — THE PAWNEES — THEIR TRIBAL MARK — LEGENDS AND TRADITIONS — HUMAN SACRIFICES — FOLK-LORE

Two Strike.

THE Otoes, once occupying the region at the mouth of the Platte, were a very brave and interesting tribe. When first known to the whites, in the early part of the century, the chief of the nation was I-e-tan, a man of great courage, excellent judgment, and crafty, as are always the most intelligent of the North American savages. His leading attributes were penetration of character, close observation of everything that occurred, and a determination to carry out his ideas, which were remarkable in their development. An old regular army officer, long since dead, who knew I-e-tan well and spoke his language, said that he had known him to form estimates of men, judicious, if not accurate, from half an hour's acquaintance, and without understanding a word that was spoken. But beneath his calm exterior there burned a lava of impetuous passions, which, when strongly moved, burst forth with a fierce and blind violence.

I-e-tan had the advantage of a fine and commanding figure, so remarkable, indeed, that once at a dinner, on a public occasion, at Jefferson Barracks, his health was drunk, with a complimentary allusion to the lines from Shakespeare: —

> "A combination and a form indeed,
> Where every god did seem to set his seal
> To give the world assurance of a man."

In a deep carousal which took place one night in the village, in 1822, his brother, a fine fellow, named Blue-eyes (that colour being rare[1] among the Indians), had the misfortune to bite off a small piece of I-e-tan's nose. So soon as he became sensible of this irreparable injury, to which, as an Indian, he was, perhaps, even more sensitive than a white man, I-e-tan burned with a mortal resentment. He retired, telling his brother that he would kill him. He got a rifle, returned, and deliberately shot him through the heart. He had found Blue-eyes leaning with folded arms against a pillar of his lodge, and thus, with a heroic stoicism, which has been rightly attributed as a characteristic of the race, without a murmur, or the quiver of a muscle, he submitted to his cruel fate.

Then was I-e-tan seized with a violent remorse, and exhibited the redeeming traits of repentance and inconsolable grief, and of greatness, in the very constancy of the absorbing sentiment. He retired from all intercourse with his race, abstaining wholly from drink, for which he had a propensity, and, as if under a vow, he went naked for nearly two years. He also meditated suicide, and was probably only prevented from committing it by the influence of a white friend. He sought honourable death in desperate encounters with all the enemies he could find, and in this period acquired his name, or title, from a very destructive attack he made upon a party of another tribe. He lived a year or two with the Pawnees, acquiring perfectly their difficult language, and attaining a great influence over them, which he never lost. After several years of such penance, I-e-tan revisited the villages of his nation, and, in 1830, on the death of La Criniere, his elder brother, succeeded him as principal chief.

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[1] Although very rare indeed, among all other tribes, it was the leading physical characteristic with the Mandans, a nation long since extinct, who occupied the region at the mouth of the Yellowstone.

I-e-tan married many of the finest girls of his own and neighbouring tribes, but never had any children. Latterly one of his wives presented him with a male child, which was born with teeth. I-e-tan pronounced it a special interposition of the Great Spirit, of which this extraordinary sign was proof.

I-e-tan was the last chief who could so far resist the ruinous influence of the increasing communication of his tribe with the villanous, the worse than barbarous, whites of the extreme frontier as to keep the young men under a tolerable control, but his death proved a signal for license and disorder.

Intemperance was the great fault in I-e-tan's character, and the cause of his greatest misfortune and crime. It led to his violent death. The circumstances of this tragedy are worthy of record, if only that they develop some strong traits of aboriginal character. They are as follows: In April, 1837, accompanied by his two youngest wives, at a trading-house at the mouth of the Platte, he indulged in one of his most violent fits of drunkenness, and in this condition, on a dark and inclement night, drove his wives out of doors. Two men of his tribe, who witnessed these circumstances, persuaded the women to fly in their company.

One of these men had formerly been dangerously stabbed by I-e-tan. Actuated by hatred, calculating the chief's power was on the decline, and depending on the strength of their connections, which were influential, the seducers became tired of living out in hunting-camps and elsewhere, and determined to return to the village and face it out. Such cases of elopement are not very frequent; but after a much longer absence the parties generally become silently reconciled, if necessary, through the arrangement of friends. I-e-tan said, however, that it was not only a personal insult and injury, but an evidence of defiance of his power, and that he would live or die the chief of the Otoes. His enemies had prepared their friends for resistance, and I-e-tan armed himself for the conflict. He sought and found the young men in the skirts of the village, near some trees where their supporters were concealed. I-e-tan addressed the man whom he had formerly wounded: "Stand aside! I do not wish to kill *you;* I have perhaps injured you enough." The fellow immediately fled. He then fired upon the other, and missed him. As the white man was about to return the fire, he was shot down by a nephew of I-e-tan's from a great distance. I-e-tan then drew a pistol, jumped astride his fallen enemy, and was about to blow out his brains, when the interpreter, Dorian, hoping even then to stop bloodshed, struck up his pistol, which was discharged in the air, and seized him around the body and arms. At this instant the wounded man, writhing in the agony of death, discharged his rifle at random. The ball shattered Dorian's arm and broke both of I-e-tan's, but the latter, being then unloosened, sprang and stamped upon the body, and called upon his sister, an old woman, to beat out his brains. This she did with an axe, with which she had come running with his friends and nephews from the village. At this instant — Dorian being out of the way — a volley was fired at I-e-tan, and five balls penetrated his body. Then his nephews, coming too late to his support, took swift vengeance. They fired at his now flying enemies, and, although they were in motion, nearly two hundred yards distant, three of them fell dead.

I-e-tan was conveyed to his lodge in the village, where being surrounded by many relations and friends, he deplored the condition of the nation, and warned them against the dangers to which it was exposed. He assured them most positively that if he willed it, he could continue to live, but that many of the Ottoes had become such dogs that he was weary of governing them, and that his arms being broken, he could no longer be a great warrior. He gave some messages for his friend, the agent, who was expected at the village, and then turning to a bystander, told him he had heard that day that he had a bottle of whiskey, and ordered him to bring it. This being done, he caused it to be poured down his throat, and when drunk he sang his death song and died.

The Pawnees were the next considerable tribe on the Salt Lake Trail, west of the Otoes. The Pawnee territory, as late as sixty years ago, extended from the Niobrara, south to the Arkansas. This territory embraced a large portion of what is now Kansas and Nebraska, but it must not be supposed for a moment that they held undisputed possession of this territory. On their north a constant war was waged against them by the Dakotas, or Sioux, while on the south every tribe, comprising the Osages, the Comanches, the Arapahoes, and the Kiowas, were equally relentless in their hostility. In fact, as far back as their history and traditions date, the Pawnees were constantly on the defensive against the almost numberless hereditary enemies by which they were surrounded. No greater proof of their prowess is needed than the statement that during all the years of their continual warfare, they held possession of their vast and phenomenally rich hunting-grounds. In 1833, by treaty they surrendered to the United States all of their territory south of the Platte River. In 1858 they gave up their remaining territory, excepting a strip thirty miles long and fifteen miles wide upon the Loup Fork of the Platte. In 1874 they sold this last of their original possessions to the United States and were placed upon a Reservation in the Indian Territory.

In the traditions of the several bands it is related that the Pawnees originally came from the south.

The tribal mark of the Pawnee is a scalp-lock, nearly erect, having the appearance of a horn. In order to keep it in its upright position, it was filled with vermilion or some other pigment. It is claimed by those who have made a special study of this tribe that the name Pawnee is derived from *pa-rik-i*, a horn.

Lewis and Clarke found them above the mouth of the Cheyenne River. Both these early explorers state in their *Itinerary* that the Pawnee women were very handsome. At that date they were very friendly toward the United States, and remained so for a great many years. Seventeen or eighteen years afterward they became fearfully hostile. This remarkable change in their attitude toward the government has been attributed to the action of the Northwestern Fur Company, which spared no efforts to divert the trade of the Pawnee region from the Missouri Fur Company. Their first outbreak was in 1823, when they made a raid upon some boats of the last-mentioned company, killing and wounding a number of their men. In consequence of this overt act, an expedition under Colonel Leavenworth, in conjunction with six hundred friendly Dakotas, was organized at Council Bluffs, and sent against them. In August of that same year a treaty of peace was made with them, but nine years afterward

Catlin found them so hostile that it was dangerous to attempt any intercourse with them.[1]

All of the early French writers have much to say of the Pawnees, but there is not space in this book to quote the many interesting facts contained in their writings. Their number in the early years of the century, according to various authors, differs materially, one enumerating them as high as twenty-five thousand, another as low as six thousand. In 1838 the tribe suffered terribly from smallpox, which it is alleged was communicated to it by Dakota women they had taken as prisoners. The mortality among the grown persons was not very great, but that of the children was enormous. In 1879, according to the official census of the Indian Bureau, the tribe had been reduced to one thousand four hundred and forty.

One eminent author, Mr. John B. Dunbar, very correctly says: "The causes of this continual decrease are several. The most constantly acting influence has been the deadly warfare with surrounding tribes. Probably not a year in this century has been without losses from this source, though only occasionally have they been marked with considerable disasters. In 1832 the Ski-di band suffered a severe defeat on the Arkansas from the Comanches. In 1847 a Dakota war-party, numbering over seven hundred, attacked a village occupied by two hundred and sixteen Pawnees, and succeeded in killing eighty-three. In 1854 a party of one hundred and thirteen were cut off by an overwhelming body of Cheyennes and Kiowas, and killed almost to a man. In 1873 a hunting party of about four hundred, two hundred and thirteen of whom were men, on the Republican, while in the act of killing a herd of buffalo, were attacked by nearly six hundred Dakota warriors, and eighty-six were killed. But the usual policy of their enemies has been to cut off individuals, or small scattered parties, while engaged in the chase or in tilling isolated corn patches. Losses of this kind, trifling when taken singly, have in the aggregate borne heavily on the tribe. It would seem that such losses, annually recurring, should have taught them to be more on their guard. But let it be remembered that the struggle has not been in one direction, against one enemy. The Dakotas, Crows, Kiowas, Cheyennes, Arapahoes, Comanches, Osages, and Kansans have faithfully aided each other, though undesignedly in the main, in this crusade of extermination against the Pawnees. It has been, in the most emphatic sense, a struggle of the one against the many. With the possible exception of the Dakotas, there is much reason to believe that the animosity of these tribes has been acerbated by the galling tradition of disastrous defeats which Pawnee prowess had inflicted upon themselves in past generations. To them the last seventy years have been a carnival of revenge."

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[1] This band was known as the Arikaras — not the Pawnees proper.

The Pawnees once were a great people. They had everything that heart could wish. Their corn and buffalo gave them food, clothing, and shelter. They were very light-hearted and contented when at peace; in war they were cunning, fierce, and generally successful. Their very name was a terror to their enemies.

When the Pawnees of the Platte were sorely afflicted with smallpox, and when they were visited by their agent, he depicts in his report the most horrible scenes. The poor wretches were utterly ignorant of any remedy or alleviation. Some sank themselves to the mouth in the river, and awaited death which was thus hastened. The living could not always protect the dying and dead from the wolves. Their chief, Capote Bleu, once exclaimed to an American officer: "Oh my father, how many glorious battles we might have fought, and not lost so many men!"

The Pawnees were probably the most degraded, in point of morals, of all the Western tribes; they were held in such contempt by the other tribes that none would make treaties with them. They were populous at one time, and were the most inveterate enemies of the whites, killing them wherever they met.

The Pawnees in reality comprised five bands, which constituted the entire nation: The Grand Pawnee Band; the Republican Pawnee Band; Pawnee Loups, or Wolf Pawnees; Pawnee Picts, or Tattooed Pawnees; and Black Pawnees. Each land was independent and under its own chief, but for mutual defence, or in other cases of urgent necessity, they united in one body, and in the early days on the plains could raise from thirty to forty thousand warriors.

They were, perhaps, the most cruel of all Indian nations. They evinced a demoniacal delight in inflicting the most exquisite tortures upon their captives. They were impure, both in their ordinary conversation and in their daily conduct. Still, they had some redeeming qualities. The recognition of the claims of their relations might be emulated by our higher civilization; so impressed upon their natures was the duty to those who were related to them, that their language contains a proverb: "Ca-si-ri pi-rus, he wi-ti ti-ruk-ta-pi-di-hu-ru, — Why, even the worms, they love each other — much more should men." They were also very hospitable, very sociable, and fond of telling stories. They really had a literature of stories and songs, which, if they could be gathered in their entirety, would make a large volume.

"One form of sacrifice formerly practised in the tribe, or rather in one band, — for the other bands emphatically disclaimed any share in the barbarous rite, — stood apart in unhappy prominence. This was the offering of human sacrifices (their captives); not burning them as an expression of embittered revenge, but sacrificing them as a religious ordinance. What the origin of this terrible practice was the Pawnees could never definitely explain. The rite was of long standing evidently. The sacrifice was made to the morning star, 'O-pir-i-kut,' which, with the Ski-di, especially, was an object of superstitious veneration. It was always about corn-planting time, and the design of the bloody ordeal was to conciliate that being and secure a good crop; hence it has been supposed that the morning star was regarded by them as presiding over agriculture, but it was not so. They sacrificed to that star simply because they feared it, imagining that it exerted a malign influence if not well disposed. The sacrifice, however, was not an annual one; it was only made when special occurrences were interpreted as calling for it. The victim was usually a girl, or young woman, taken from their enemies. The more beautiful the unfortunate was, the more acceptable the offering. When it had been determined in a council of the band to make the sacrifice, the person was selected, if possible, some months beforehand, and placed in charge of the medicine-men, who treated her with the utmost kindness. She was fed plentifully that she might become fleshy, and kept in entire ignorance of her impending doom. During this time she was made to eat alone, lest having by chance eaten with any one of the band, she would by the law of hospitality become that person's guest, and he be bound to protect her. On the morning of the day finally fixed for the ordeal, she was led from lodge to lodge throughout the village, begging wood and paint, not knowing that these articles were for her own immolation. Whenever a stick of wood or portion of red or black paint was given her, it was taken by the medicine-men attending, and sent to the spot selected for the final rite. A sufficient quantity of these materials having been collected, the ceremony was begun by a solemn conclave of all the medicine-men. Smoking the great medicine pipe, displaying the contents of the medicine bundle, dancing, praying, etc., were repeated at different stages of the proceedings. A framework of two posts, about four and a half feet apart, was set in the ground, and to them two horizontal crosspieces, at a height of two and seven feet, were firmly fastened. Between the posts a slow fire was built. At nightfall the victim was disrobed and the torture began. After the sickening sight had continued long enough, an old man, previously appointed, discharged an arrow at the heart of the unfortunate, and freed her from further torture. The medicine-men forthwith cut open the chest, took out the heart, and burned it. The smoke rising from the fire in which it was burning was supposed to possess wonderful virtues, and implements of war, hunting, and agriculture were passed through it to insure success in their use. The flesh was hacked from the body, buried in the corn patches, thrown to the dogs, or disposed of in any way that caprice might direct. The skeleton was allowed to remain in position till, loosened by decay, it fell to the ground."[1]

The last time this sacrifice was made, according to official reports, was sixty years ago (April, 1838). Dunbar relates this last reported sacrifice as follows: "The winter previous to the date given, the Ski-di, soon after starting on their hunt, had a successful fight with a band of Ogallalla Sioux, killed several men and took over twenty children. Fearing that the Sioux, according to their tactics, would retaliate by coming upon them in overwhelming force, they returned for safety to their village before taking a sufficient number of buffalo. With little to eat, they lived miserably, lost many of their ponies from scarcity of forage, and, worst of all, one of the captives proved to have the smallpox, which rapidly spread through the band, and in the spring was communicated to the rest of the tribe. All these accumulated misfortunes the Ski-di attributed to the anger of the morning star, and accordingly they resolved to propitiate its favour by a repetition of the sacrifice, though in direct violation of a stipulation made two years before that the sacrifice should not occur again.

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[1] See Long's *Expedition* and Schoolcraft's *Indian Tribes*.

"In connection with its abolition, the oft-told story of Pit-a-le-shar-u is recalled. Sa-re-cer-ish, second chief of the Cau-i band, was a man of unusually humane disposition, and had strenuously endeavoured to secure the suppression of the practice. In the spring of 1817 the Ski-di arranged to sacrifice a Comanche girl. After Sa-re-cer-ish had essayed in vain to dissuade them, Pit-a-le-shar-u, a young man about twenty years of age, of almost giant stature, and already famed as a great brave, conceived the bold design of rescuing her. On the day set for the rite he actually cut the girl loose, after she had been tied to the stakes, placed her upon a horse that he had in readiness, and hurried her away across the prairies till they were come within a day's journey of her people's village. There, after giving necessary directions as to her course, he dismissed her, himself returning to the Pawnees. The suddenness and intrepidity of his movements, and his known prowess, were no doubt all that saved him from death at the moment of the rescue and after his return. Twice afterward he presumed to interfere. In one instance, soon after the foregoing, he assisted in securing by purchase the ransom of a Spanish boy, who had been set apart for sacrifice. Several years later, about 1831, he aided in the attempted rescue of a girl. The resistance on this occasion was so determined that even after the girl had been bought and was mounted upon a horse behind Major Daugherty, at that time general agent, to be taken from the Ski-di village, she was shot by one of the medicine-men. The magnanimous conduct of Sa-re-cer-ish and Pit-a-le-shar-u in this matter stands almost unexampled in Indian annals."

The Pawnees were essentially a religious people, if one may be allowed to use the term in connection with a tribe whose morals were at such a low ebb. They worshipped Ti-ra-wa, who is in and of everything. Differing from many tribes, who adore material things, the Pawnees simply regarded certain localities as sacred — they became so only because they were blessed by the Divine presence. Ti-ra-wa was not personified; he was as intangible as the God of the Christian. The sacred nature of the Pawnee deity extended to all animal nature — the fish that swim in the rivers, the birds that fly in the air, and all the beasts which roam over the prairie were believed by the Pawnee to possess intelligence, knowledge, and power far beyond that of man. They were not, however, considered as gods; their miraculous attributes were given to them by their ruler, whose servants they were, and who often made them the medium of his communications to man. They were his messengers, his angels, and their powers were always used for good. Prayers were made to them in time of need, but rather pleading for their intercession with Ti-ra-wa than directly to them. All important undertakings were preceded by a prayer for help, and success in their undertakings was acknowledged by grateful offerings to the ruler. The victorious warrior frequently sacrificed the scalp torn from the head of his enemy, which was burned with much elaborate mummery by the medicine-men, and he who brought back from a raid many horses always gave one to the chief medicine-man as a thank-offering to Ti-ra-wa.

The Pawnees entertained feelings of reverence and humility only toward their god; they really did not love him, but looked to him for help at all times. The young braves were particularly exhorted to humble themselves before Ti-ra-wa, to pray to him, and to look to One Above, to ask help from him.

During Monroe's administration, a very influential and physically powerful Indian named Two Axe, chief counsellor of the Pawnee Loups, went to pay a visit to the "Great Father," the President of the United States. Two Axe was over six feet high and well proportioned, of athletic build, and as straight as an arrow. He had been delegated to go to Washington by his tribe to make a treaty with the government.

Having been introduced to the President, the latter made known to him, through the interpreter, the substance of a proposal. The keen-witted Indian, perceiving that the treaty taught "all Turkey" to the white man, and "all Crow" to his tribe, sat patiently during the reading of the document. When it was finished, he rose with all his native dignity, and in a vein of true Indian eloquence, in which he was unsurpassed, declared that the treaty had been conceived in injustice and born in duplicity; that many treaties had been signed by Indians of their "Great Father's" concoction, wherein they had bartered away the graves of their ancestors for a few worthless trinkets, and afterward their hearts cried out for their folly; that such Indians were fools and women. He expressed very freely his opinion of the President and the whites generally, and concluded by declaring that he would sign no paper which would ever cause his own breast or those of his people to sorrow.

Accordingly, Two Axe broke up the council abruptly, and returned to his home without making any treaty with his "Great Father" at all.

The folk-lore stories and songs of the Pawnees are full of pathos, humour, and thrilling incidents. The legend of the Dun Horse is comparable in its enchantment to the stories of Aladdin and his wonderful lamp.

"Many years ago there lived in the Pawnee tribe an old woman and her grandson, a boy about sixteen years old. These people had no relations, and were very poor. Indeed, they were so miserably poor that they were despised by the rest of the tribe. They had nothing of their own, and always, after the village started to move the camp from one place to another, these two would stay behind the rest, to look over the old ground and pick up anything that the other Indians had thrown away as worn out or useless. In this way they would sometimes get pieces of robes, worn-out moccasins with holes in them, and bits of meat.

"Now it happened one day, after the tribe had moved away from the camp, that this old woman and her boy were following along the trail behind the rest, when they came to a miserable, old, worn-out horse, which they supposed had been abandoned by some Indians. He was thin and exhausted, was blind of one eye, had a sore back, and one of his fore legs was very much swollen. In fact, he was so worthless that none of the Pawnees had been willing to take the trouble to try to drive him along with them. But when the old woman and her boy came along, the boy said: 'Come now, we will take this old horse, for we can make him carry our pack.' So the old woman put her pack on the horse and drove him along, but he limped and could only go very slowly.

"The tribe moved up on the North Platte, until they came to Court-house Rock. The two poor Indians followed them, and camped with the others. One day while they were here, the young men who had been sent out for buffalo came hurrying into camp and told the chiefs that a large herd of buffalo were near, and that among them was a spotted calf.

"The head chief of the Pawnees had a very beautiful daughter, and when he heard about the spotted calf, he ordered his old crier to go about through the village, and call out that the man who should kill the spotted calf should have his daughter for wife. For a spotted robe is 'Ti-war-uks-ti' (Big Medicine).

"The buffalo were feeding about four miles from the village, and the chiefs decided that the charge should be made from there. In this way the man who had the fastest horse would be the most likely to kill the calf. Then all the warriors and men picked out their best and fastest horses, and made ready to start. Among those who prepared for the charge was the poor boy, on the old dun horse. But when they saw him, all the rich young braves on their fast horses pointed at him and said: 'Oh, see; there is the horse that is going to catch the spotted calf'; and they laughed at him so that the poor boy was ashamed, and rode off to one side of the crowd, where he could not hear their jokes and laughter.

"When he had ridden off some little way, the horse stopped, and turned his head around and spoke to the boy. He said: 'Take me down to the creek, and plaster me all over with mud. Cover my head, and neck, and body, and legs.' When the boy heard the horse speak, he was afraid; but he did as he was told. Then the horse said: 'Now mount, but do not ride back to the warriors who laugh at you because you have such a poor horse. Stay right here, until the word is given to charge.' So the boy stayed there.

"And presently all the fine horses were drawn up in line and pranced about, and were so eager to go that their riders could hardly hold them in. At last the old crier gave the word, 'Loo-ah' (go). Then the Pawnees all leaned forward on their horses and yelled, and away they went. Suddenly, away off to the right, was seen the old dun horse. He did not seem to run. He seemed to sail along like a bird. He passed all the fastest horses, and in a moment he was among the buffalo. First he picked out the spotted calf, and charging up alongside of it, straight flew the arrow. The calf fell. The boy drew another arrow and killed a fat cow that was running by. Then he dismounted and began to skin the spotted calf before any of the other warriors came up. But when the rider got off the old dun horse, how changed he was! He pranced about and could hardly stand still near the dead buffalo. His back was all right again; his legs were well and fine; and both his eyes were clear and bright.

"The boy skinned the calf and cow that he had killed, and then he packed the meat on the horse and put the spotted robe on top of the load, and started back to camp on foot, leading the dun horse. But even with his heavy load the horse pranced all the while, and was scared at everything he saw. On the way to camp, one of the rich young chiefs of the tribe rode up to the boy, and offered him twelve good horses for the spotted robe, so that he could marry the head chief's daughter, but the boy laughed at him and would not sell the robe.

"Now, while the boy walked to the camp leading the dun horse, most of the warriors rode back, and one of those that came first to the village went to the old woman and said to her: 'Your grandson has killed the spotted calf.' And the old woman said: 'Why do you come to tell me this? You ought to be ashamed to make fun of my boy because he is poor.' The warrior rode away, saying, 'What I have told you is true.' After a while another brave rode up to the old woman, and said to her: 'Your grandson has killed the spotted calf.' Then the old woman began to cry, she felt so badly because every one made fun of her boy because he was poor.

"Pretty soon the boy came along, leading the horse up to the lodge where he and his grandmother lived. It was a little lodge, just big enough for two, and was made of old pieces of skin that the old woman had picked up, and was tied together with strings of rawhide and sinew. It was the meanest and worst lodge in the village. When the old woman saw her boy leading the dun horse with a load of meat and the robes on it, she was very much surprised. The boy said to her: 'Here, I have brought you plenty of meat to eat, and here is a robe that you may have for yourself. Take the meat off the horse.' Then the old woman laughed, for her heart was glad. But when she went to take the meat from the horse's back, he snorted and jumped about, and acted like a wild horse. The old woman looked at him and wondered, and could hardly believe that it was the same horse. So the boy had to take off the meat, for the horse would not let the old woman come near him.

"That night the horse again spoke to the boy, and said: 'Wa-ti-hes Chah-ra-rat-wa-ta.' To-morrow the Sioux are coming in a large war-party. They will attack the village, and you will have a great battle. Now, when the Sioux are drawn up in line of battle, and are all ready to fight, you jump on me, and ride as hard as you can, right into the middle of the Sioux, and up to their head chief, their greatest warrior, and count *coup* on him, and kill him, and then ride back. Do this four times, and count *coup* on four of the bravest Sioux, and kill them, but don't go again. If you go the fifth time, maybe you will be killed, or else you will lose me. 'La-ku-ta-chix' (remember). The boy promised.

"The next day it happened as the horse had said, and the Sioux came down and formed in line of battle. Then the boy took his bow and arrows, and jumped on the dun horse, and charged into the midst of them. And when the Sioux saw that he was going to strike their head chief, they all shot their arrows at him, and the arrows flew so thickly across each other that they darkened the sky, but none of them hit the boy, and he counted *coup* on the chief and killed him, and then rode back. After that he charged again among the Sioux, where they were gathered the thickest, and counted *coup* on their bravest warrior and killed him. And then twice more, until he had gone four times as the horse had told him.

"But the Sioux and the Pawnees kept on fighting, and the boy stood around and watched the battle. At last he said to himself, 'I have been four times and have killed four Sioux; why may I not go again?' So he jumped on the dun horse and charged again. But when he got among the Sioux, one Sioux warrior drew an arrow and shot. The arrow struck the dun horse behind the fore legs and pierced him through. And the horse fell down dead. But the boy jumped off and fought his way through the Sioux and ran away as fast as he could to the Pawnees. Now, as soon as the horse was killed, the Sioux said to each other, 'This horse was like a man. He was brave. He was not like a horse.' And they took their knives and hatchets and hacked the dun horse and gashed his flesh, and cut him into small pieces.

"The Pawnees and Sioux fought all day long, but toward night the Sioux broke and fled.

"The boy felt very badly that he had lost his horse, and after the fight was over he went out from the village to where it had taken place to mourn for his horse. He went to the spot where the horse lay, and gathered up all the pieces of flesh which the Sioux had cut off, and the legs and hoofs, and put them all together in a pile. Then he went off to the top of a hill near by and sat down and drew his robe over his head, and began to mourn for his horse.

"As he sat there, he heard a great wind storm coming up, and it passed over him with a loud rushing sound, and after the wind came a rain. The boy looked down from where he sat to the pile of flesh and bones, which was all that was left of the horse, and he could just see it through the rain. And the rain passed by, and his heart was very heavy and he kept on mourning.

"And pretty soon came another rushing wind, and after it a rain; and as he looked through the driving rain toward the spot where the pieces lay, he thought that they seemed to come together and take shape, and that the pile looked like a horse lying down, but he could not see very well for the thick rain.

"After this came a third storm like the others; and now when he looked toward the horse he thought he saw its tail move from side to side two or three times, and that it lifted its head from the ground. The boy was afraid and wanted to run away, but he stayed. And as he waited, there came another storm. And while the rain fell, looking through the rain, the boy saw the horse raise himself up on his fore legs and look about. Then the dun horse stood up.

"The boy left the place where he had been sitting on the hilltop, and went down to him. When the boy had come near to him the horse spoke and said, 'You have seen how it has been this day; and from this you will know how it will be after this. But Ti-ra-wa has been good, and he let me come to life back to you. After this do what I tell you; not any more, not any less.' Then the horse said, 'Now lead me far off, far away from the camp, behind that big hill, and leave me there to-night, and in the morning come for me'; and the boy did as he was told.

"And when he went for the horse in the morning, he found with him a beautiful white gelding, much more handsome than any horse in the tribe. That night the dun horse told the boy to take him again to the place behind the big hill and to come for him the next morning; and when the boy went for him again, he found a beautiful black gelding. And so for ten nights he left the horse among the hills, and each morning he found a different-coloured horse, a bay, a roan, a gray, a blue, a spotted horse, and all of them finer than any horses that the Pawnees had ever had in the tribe before.

"Now the boy was rich, and he married the beautiful daughter of the head chief, and when he became older he was made head chief himself. He had many children by his beautiful wife, and one day, when his oldest boy died, he wrapped him in his spotted calf robe and buried him in it. He always took good care of his old grandmother, and kept her in his own lodge until she died. The dun horse was never ridden except at feasts and when they were going to have a doctors' dance, but he was always led about with the chief wherever he went. The horse lived in the village for many years, until he became very old, and at last he died."

Where the Desert meets the Great Salt Lake

CHAPTER XII

THE SIOUX NATION — CAUSE OF THEIR HATRED FOR THE WHITES — A CHIEF OF THE BRULÉ SIOUX TELLS A STORY — THE SCARRED-ARMS — STORY OF THE SIX SIOUX AND THE MYSTERIOUS WOMAN — THE PLACE OF THE DEATH SONG — WA-SHU-PA AND OGALLALLA — INDIAN FIGHT AT ASH HOLLOW — INDIAN TRADITION OF A FLOOD

A LITTLE more than half a century ago the many bands of the great Sioux nation[1] hardly knew anything of the civilization of the whites in any part of the continent; none of their chiefs had ever visited the capital of the nation, or, for that matter, any American settlement. They knew nothing of the English language. The few whites they had ever met were those employed by the great fur companies. They regarded them to be a wise sort of a people, a little inferior, however, to themselves, living in lodges like their own and subsisting on the buffalo and other wild game constituting the food of the Indians.

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[1] The proper designation of this numerous tribe is Dakota, meaning allied; the word "Sioux," although difficult to trace to its proper origin, is generally conceded to be a nickname — one of reproach given to them by their ancient enemies east of the Mississippi.

When that relatively great exodus from the States commenced, beginning with the Mormon hegira, closely followed by emigrants on their way to Oregon, this tide, with its great number of oxen, wagons, and other means of transportation, at first so astonished the Sioux, who had never believed for a moment that the world contained so many white men, that they were completely dumbfounded. When, however, they saw the wanton slaughter of buffalo by this army of men, their amazement turned to hatred and a desire for revenge, and then commenced that series of wars and skirmishes, with their attendant horrible massacres, ending with the battle of Wounded Knee.

In the summer of 1846 there was a pall of sorrow and disaster hovering over all of the bands of the western Dakotas; the year previous they had met with great reverses. Many large war-parties had been sent out from the various villages, the majority of which were either badly whipped or entirely cut off. The few warriors who returned to their homes were heartbroken and discouraged; so that the whole nation was in mourning.

Among these war-parties, ten of the Sioux warriors made a raid into the Snake country. They were led by the son of a prominent Ogallalla chief, called the Whirlwind. When they reached the Laramie Plains they were met by a superior number of their enemies, and every warrior killed to a man. The Snakes having accomplished this, they became greatly alarmed at what they had done, dreading the revenge of the Dakotas, which they knew would be inevitable; so, desiring to signify their wish for peace, they sent the scalp of one of their victims, with a small piece of tobacco attached, to his relations. The Snakes induced one of the Indian traders to act as their messenger on this mission of peace, and the scalp was hung up in a room at Fort Laramie, but Whirlwind, the father of the dead warrior who had led the unfortunate band, was inexorable. He hated the Snakes with his whole soul, and long before the scalp had arrived he had consummated his preparations for revenge. He despatched runners loaded with presents of tobacco and other trinkets to all the Dakotas within three hundred miles of his village. They were to propose a grand combination for the purpose of war, and to determine upon a place and time for the meeting of the warriors. Ever ready for war, as is the normal attitude of the average North American savage, the Whirlwind's plan was readily acceded to, and a camp on the Platte, known as Labonte's, was the point designated as the rendezvous. At that place their war-like ceremonies were to be celebrated with great dignity and solemnity; a thousand warriors, it is declared, were to be sent out into the enemy's country; but the thing ended in smoke. True, a great many Indians gathered there, but they went on a big buffalo hunt instead of fighting the Snakes.

The Sioux are noted for their individual bravery, and whole chapters might be written of their prowess, but the following incident will suffice to show the character of their daring. In 1846 a celebrated warrior performed a notable exploit at the Pawnee village on the Loup Fork of the Platte. He arrived there all alone, late one dark night, and climbing up the outside of one of the lodges, quietly gazed for a few moments, through the round hole for the escape of smoke at the top, at the unsuspecting inmates sleeping peacefully under their buffalo-robes around the expiring fire. Dropping himself lightly through the opening, he noiselessly unsheathed his knife, and, stirring the embers, stood for a moment as if selecting his victims, then one by one he stabbed and scalped them.

Just as he had wrenched the reeking locks from the last victim, a child suddenly sat up and began to scream violently, upon which the warrior rushed out of the door of the lodge uttering the terrible Sioux war-cry. Then shouting his own name in triumph and defiance, he darted out upon the dark prairie, leaving the whole village behind him in a tumult with the howling of a hundred dogs, the screams of the women, and the yells of the enraged Pawnee braves.

The folk-lore and tales of the Sioux, though not so numerous, perhaps, as among the more sociable Pawnees, are full of interest and the superstitions of the tribe.

Many years ago, in a camp of delighted trappers, one of the chiefs of the Brulé Sioux related the following story of his own experience when only a young brave in the councils of his nation:—

"When I was a youthful warrior, I used to delight in war, and very seldom did a party go out on the war-path without me. My scars (which the old fellow showed on his body) prove to you that I am speaking the truth, and that I was always to be found in the thickest of the fight. We hardly ever came back to our village without a dozen or more scalps torn from the heads of our enemies. Sometimes, too, we returned like fools, without a single scalp, and then were ashamed to present ourselves at the dances.

"Once we were out after the Crows, and our spies were far in advance of the main body of warriors. We were hurrying on, expecting soon to meet the enemy, when we saw the spy, whom we had sent ahead, come back without any bows or arrows; his scalp was torn off and his face was covered with blood.

"When questioned about his strange appearance, he replied that the enemy were aware of the approach of our band, and were lying in ambush for us in great numbers. He suddenly came upon their runners, who robbed him of his arms, tore off his scalp, and left him for dead. He stated that he remained quietly where he had fallen until night came on, and when the breeze came down from the mountains it gave him strength to come to us and warn us of the enemy's nearness and great numbers.

"Believing his story to be true, we turned tail and made our way back to our village empty-handed, to be laughed at.

"Three moons passed, and we again started for the country of our enemies. The warrior who had lost his scalp having recovered, and being again with us, he was sent out as a spy. He soon returned with the scalps of two of the enemy dangling from his spear-point. He did not stop to tell of his adventures, but hurried us on to meet the foe, and following him eagerly, we soon came to where they were, and after a hard fight came out victorious.

"Among those who were killed was a warrior whose scalp was missing. Who did this? asked one of the other, but no one answered. At last our spy laughingly said, 'Behind that hill over there,' pointing with his spear to a large mountain, 'there is a fountain that sings a melody fit for the ears of great warriors; let's go to it and drink.'

"Following his footsteps, he led us to a beautiful spring whose water was as shining as silver, and which fell in beautiful song over the rocks in its bed, and all around the charming spot were large old cottonwoods, which threw a grateful shade over the fountain, making it clear and always cool.

"'Drink freely, warriors,' said the spy; then hiding himself for a moment he returned among us, having with him all his arms and the robe he wore when he had first left us on his mission to hunt the enemy, so many moons before.

"We gazed at him in astonishment, when, seeing our amazement, he said: —

"'Brother warriors, you wondered at my misfortune and hard luck when we last visited the Crow country; you wondered at my sorrowful condition among the killed just now, but you will be more astonished to know that I now stand among you having what I had lost. Would you also like to know how I procured the scalps of two of the enemy?

"'Three times has the full moon turned her face upon us Sioux since at this very spot I met an enemy. We rushed at each other for the attack, when he cried: —

"'Are we not both braves? Why should we fight? When our warriors meet in the heat of the battle, then we may join them — until then let us have a truce.

"'To this I answered, Says the Crow peace?

"'This said, we shook hands and sat down by the fountain. To amuse my enemy I proposed a game of "hand."[1] He accepted my challenge, and we first played for an arrow against an arrow, then bow for bow, robe for robe, and scalp for scalp. I was out of luck and lost everything. I handed to him all the things, but with a promise from him that I should have another chance when we met again.

"'We did meet again. The Great Spirit smiled upon me and I won back everything. Then I said, Crow, scalp for scalp. He accepted the challenge and we played. He lost, and I with my winnings arose to leave.

"'Sioux warrior, said he, meet me in the fight that we may try the game of arms.

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[1] A common game among the savages. One party to the game takes a pebble or small bullet in the curve of both his hands. After he has tossed it about for a few seconds, he swiftly holds them apart, and if his opponent can guess which hand the pebble or stone is in, he wins; if not, he loses. Immense amounts are frequently wagered in this game, for the North American Indian is an inveterate gambler.

"'That pleases me, I replied; will the Crow name the place?

"'A valley lies beyond this hill, said he; there my people await their enemies; let me hope to see you with them.

"'To that place I led you, said our spy. We fought and conquered. My opponent was among the killed. Need I tell you who took the scalp?'"

There is an affluent of the Cheyenne River called by the Sioux "Weur-sena-wakpa." The stream rises at the base of a lofty mountain of the same name. This mountain is held in great veneration by the Sioux nation, and a member of that tribe rarely went into the neighbourhood without making an offering to it.

The legend concerning its mystery is one of the beautiful myths of the Sioux.

Many ages ago, when the Sioux lived to the north and the Shoshone or Snake tribe of Indians lived in the region of the mountains, planting their villages and hunting all over the country for game, the whole region was a series of lakes and creeks; only the highlands bordering them were left for the deer and buffalo to graze. Then the creeks and rivers slowly rose, and the land of the Shoshones was greatly reduced by the encroachment of the water. Years passed on, and the tribe, attracted by some more suitable region, went away, or were driven off by the hostile bands, especially the Scarred-Arms (the Cheyennes [1]).

In the course of a great many years the Sioux and the Scarred-Arms always fought with each other with varying success, whenever they met; sometimes one tribe, sometimes the other, was victorious.

Once a band of the Sioux entered into the very heart of the country of the Scarred-Arms, and while on their return to their own country, fell into an ambush of the enemy, and only six out of the whole party escaped to convey the terrible news to their village.

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[1] The name owes its origin to the practice of this tribe scarring the left arm, crosswise, a custom which was kept up until a few years ago.

These six, hotly pursued by the Scarred-Arms, sought refuge in the mountains. They found there a hidden passage leading into a recess in the mountain's side, which they hurriedly entered. They were delighted with it, for it had a gravelly floor, with a spring of pure, sweet, cool water gushing out of the side of its rocky wall. There, believing they might remain secure from their enemy, they proposed to rest for a short time and recuperate themselves; for they were nearly exhausted by their efforts to escape from the bloody scalping-knives of the Scarred-Arms. They kindled a fire, around which the six warriors huddled, telling each other, as is the savage wont, of their numerous hairbreadth escapes and single combats with the common enemy; also trying to devise some means of eluding the Scarred-Arms, who they knew to be still searching for them.

While they were thus discussing the probabilities of the affair, they were startled by a strange noise, like the rustling of leaves, in a dark corner of the cave; but they were more frightened when they suddenly saw the dim form of a person moving about in the subdued light. The figure advanced toward them, and they discovered it to be that of a feeble old woman, who said as she approached them: —

"Children, you have been against the Scarred-Arms, you have fought them, and of a large party you alone are left alive. I know it all.

"You come here into my lodge to escape from your pursuers, and the sound of your voices and the heat of your council fire has disturbed my rest and waked me from a long trance. By your eager looks you would know my strange story. Many ages have gone by (for days, moons, seasons, and ages are painted before me as they pass) since the Shoshones, who lived where now live the Scarred-Arms, visited the lodges of the Sioux and made the prairie drink the blood of slaughtered warriors. I was their captive, and, with scalps of the slain, I was taken from the graves of my people. The Shoshones brought me to this country, when yet the buffalo grazed upon the hills and mountains; for the valleys and plains were the home of the waters.

"Living with the Shoshones, I was not happy. I thought of my people; of all those dear to me; and I prayed to the Good Spirit that I might again behold them ere my passage to the death-land. I fled, hoping to reach the home of my birth; but age had enfeebled me; and being pursued, I sought refuge in this cave. Here, having passed a night and a day in earnest communion with the 'Big Medicine,' a strange feeling came upon me. I slumbered in a dreamy state from then until now. But your looks again ask, who are the Shoshones? what became of them? and from whence are the Scarred-Arms?

"The Sioux will soon know the Shoshones, and bring from their lodges many scalps and medicine-dogs. Divided into two tribes, that nation long since sought homes in other lands. One crossed the Snow-hills, toward the sunsetting; the Sioux shall visit them and avenge the blood and wrongs of ages. The other journeyed far toward the sun of winter, and now live to the leftward of the places where Hispanola builds his earth-lodge.[1]

"Then came the Scarred-Arms from a far-off country, a land of much snow and cold. Pleased with the great numbers of buffalo and other game that they found here, they stopped for the chase, and by many generations of possession have claimed these regions for their own; but they are not theirs. The Great Spirit gave this country to the Sioux, and they shall inhabit the land of their daughter's captivity.

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[1] It is a fact that the Comanches and Shoshones, though living a thousand miles apart, with hostile tribes between them, speak exactly the same language, and call themselves by the same general name. They have, however, lost all tradition of having once formed one nation.

"Why are you waiting here? Go and avenge the blood of your comrades upon the Scarred-Arms. They even now light their camp-fire by the stream at the mountain's base. Fear not; their scalps are yours. Then return to my people, that ye may come and receive your inheritance.

"Haste ye, that I may die; and oh! War-ka-tun-ga! Inasmuch as thou hast answered the prayer of thy handmaid, and shown to me the faces of my people, take me from hence."

The awe-struck warriors withdrew. They found the enemy encamped at the foot of the mountain, as they had been told by the mysterious woman. They attacked them, and were victorious. Thirty-five scalps were the reward of their bravery.

On arriving at their village, their strange adventures excited the astonishment of all the warriors, chiefs, and medicine-men. They planned an expedition against the Scarred-Arms, having been nerved up to a pitch of extraordinary bravery by the story of the old woman of the cave. Thus their enemies were eventually driven from the country, and the Sioux came into possession of their own.

The thankful warriors went to the cave *en masse*, to do reverence to the memory of the strange medicine-woman who had told them so many wonderful things. They found, upon their arrival there, only a small niche in the side of the mountain, and a sparkling little stream. Both the cave and the woman had disappeared.

For years after this strange occurrence the Sioux warriors visited the land of the Shoshones for scalps, and, as they passed the mountain where the old woman had been seen, they always offered something to the spirit of the place, and stopped to quench their thirst at the sparkling little stream.

On White River there is a bluff against which the full force of the stream has dashed for ages, until it has formed a precipice several hundred feet high. It is called by the Indians The Place of the Death Song. There is a legend which says that at one time the bands of the Ogallallas and Brulés lived upon this river, immediately opposite the precipice. While residing there one of the braves of the Ogallallas offered to the father of a beautiful squaw six horses for her, according to the savage custom of thus purchasing a wife. The offer was immediately accepted by the father of the young girl, for he was very poor and needed the animals to use on the impending annual hunt after buffalo.

When the maiden heard that she was to become the wife of the Ogallalla, she burst into tears, and so obstinate was her resistance that the marriage was deferred for some days because of her inconsolable grief.

The cause of her unwillingness to become the bride of the Ogallalla was that she was in love with a young warrior of her own village, and she would not, as Indian maidens generally do, love at her sire's mere bidding.

Her father was determined, however, that his child should be governed by the customs of the tribe, and was only waiting for her sorrow to subside a little before he turned her over to the Indian he had chosen for her.

During this probation, however, the girl contrived to meet the warrior whom she had promised to marry, and they determined to elope. They accordingly fled to a remote village, where they hoped to live undisturbed.

They were pursued by the relentless father, both were captured, and the young warrior's life was forfeited by the laws of the tribe, for his presumption in stealing the maiden, while she was most unmercifully whipped and confined in her father's lodge. The Ogallalla had already paid the price agreed upon for the maiden, and the horses were then picketed among those of the irate father.

Early the next morning, after the death of her lover, the girl rose from her bed of buffalo-robes, and dressing herself in her best clothes, left the lodge. Not one of the villagers thought it at all strange that she should thus array herself, for they knew it was to be her wedding-day, and as she walked through the village, many a young warrior looked upon her with feelings of envy toward the Indian who was then to make her his bride.

She wandered toward the river, crossed it, and ascended the high peak on the opposite side. She then seated herself at the edge of the fearful precipice, and looked calmly down from its giddy height.

She soon became the cynosure of all eyes in the village, not only because of her remarkable beauty, but of her charmingly formed person, so plainly exposed to the view of all.

Presently the captivated gazers were surprised to hear her begin to sing in a mournful chant, and the strange words of her plaintive melody were wafted through the clear mountain air so that all could catch every word. They listened: —

"Why should I stay? he is gone. Light of my eyes; joy of my soul; show me my dwelling! 'Tis not here; 'tis far away in the Spirit Land. Thither he is gone. Why should I stay? Let me go!" "She sings her death song," exclaimed all who were watching and listening to her from their places in the village.

"She will throw herself from the precipice," said her father. And immediately a dozen warriors rushed toward the top of the cliff to rescue her from the terrible fate which she had chosen, and the leader of them all was the Ogallalla who was to have her for his bride.

She saw them coming, and as soon as they started she began again: —

"Spirit of death, set me free! Heart, thou art desolate. Farewell, O sun. Vain are the plains of the earth, its flowers, and purling streams. I loved you all once — but now no longer love. Thee I woo, kind Death! Wa-shu-pa calls me hence. In life we were one. We'll bask together in the Spirit Land. Short is my pass to thee. Wa-shu-pa, I come!"

Concluding her song, she threw herself forward, just as the foremost warriors arrived at the summit, in time to catch at her robe as she pitched down, leaving the garment in their hands; in another instant she was a mangled mass at the base of the cruel mountain.

In the winter of 1835 Ash Hollow was the scene of a fierce and bloody battle between the Pawnees and Sioux, hereditary enemies. The affray commenced very early in the morning, and continued until nearly dark. It was a closely fought battle. Every inch of ground was hotly contested. The arrows fell in showers, bullets whistled the death song of many a warrior on both sides, and the yells of the combating savages filled the wintry air. At length all the ammunition was completely exhausted on both sides, but still the battle raged. War-clubs, tomahawks, and scalping-knives rattled in the deadly personal conflict, and terrible war-whoops resounded, as now one side then the other gained some slight advantage.

As darkness drew over the scene, the Pawnees abandoned the field to the victorious Sioux, leaving more than sixty of their best warriors dead on the bloody sod. But the Sioux had not escaped a terrible loss. Forty-five of their bravest fighters were lying dead, and the defeated party of Pawnees were pursued but a very little distance when the chase was abandoned and they returned to their village at the forks of the Platte.

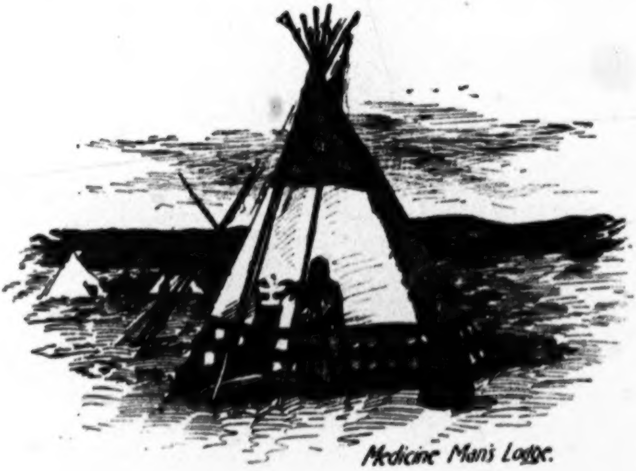
It is alleged that this disaster so humiliated the Pawnees that they at once abandoned their town. They moved down the Platte more than four hundred miles, and at the same time also abandoned their town on the Republican Fork of the Kansas River, and rarely ever ventured up the river as far as the scene of their great defeat, unless in very large parties.

For twenty years afterward the evidences of the terrible battle could be seen in the bleached bones scattered all over the vicinity of the conflict.

Many of the Indian tribes of the Great Plains and the Rocky Mountains have a tradition of a flood, but as they differ only in the matter of detail, a single one is presented here, that of the Sioux. It was told around the camp-fire, on General Carr's expedition against the hostile bands of that nation, in 1869, when Colonel W. F. Cody (Buffalo Bill) was chief of scouts.

One day some of the men brought into camp a large bone, which the surgeons pronounced to be the femur, or thigh-bone of a man. Some Indian prisoners, who had been captured a short time before, were sent for and asked to give their opinion of this find. As soon as they saw it, they, too, said it was the thigh-bone of a man.

Its peculiarity was its unusual size; in circumference it was as large as a man's body. The general asked the Indians how they knew it was the thigh-bone of a man. They replied that a great many years ago, living on the plains, there was a race of men who were so big that it was said they were tall enough to run alongside of a buffalo, pick him up, put him under one of their arms, and tear off a whole quarter of his meat and eat it as they walked on. These large men became so powerful in their own estimation that they defied the Great Spirit. This angered the Great Spirit, and he made the rain come. It kept on raining until the rivers and creeks were full of water and flooded over their banks. The Indians were compelled to move out of the valleys and go up on the divides and small hills; but they were not allowed to remain there long. The water kept rising and rising until it covered the divides and little hills; so the Indians kept moving up, higher and higher, until they reached the top peaks of the Rocky Mountains, but the water still rose until it covered the highest points, and all these big people were drowned. After they were all dead, it ceased raining; the water began to recede, and finally returned to the original channels of the rivers and creeks. Then the Great Spirit made a race of people of the size that we are to-day; people whom he could handle and who would not defy him.



Medicine Man's Lodge.

The word "medicine" in all of the tribes in some sense is a misnomer;[1] it really signifies dreamer, or prophet, and is synonymous with the word "prophet" in the Old Testament. The Indian form of government may be characterized as a theocracy, and the medicine-man is the high priest. His dreams and his prophecies are held sacred by the people. Should what he tells them turn out to be untrue, the fault lies with themselves, and he claims that his instructions have been disregarded. If by accident his dreams are exactly verified, the confidence of the tribe in their medicine-man surpasses all belief. The medicine lodge is their tabernacle of the wilderness—the habitation of the Great Spirit, the sacred ark of their faith.

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[1] As in some instances the medicine-men, so called, are really the doctors of the tribe, and as *médecin* is French for doctor, the early French voyageurs gave this term to these mystery-men, by which they have been known ever since.

CHAPTER XIII

THE CROWS — COUNCIL AT FORT PHILIP KEARNY IN JULY, 1866 — A-RA-POO-ASH — JIM BECKWOURTH IN A FIGHT BETWEEN CROWS AND BLACKFEET — BECKWOURTH AND THE GREAT MEDICINE KETTLE — THE MISSIONARY AND THE CROWS — THE LEGEND OF THE BLIND MEN — THE PIS-KUN

Blackfoot & Squaw

THE tribe of Indians known as the Crows[1] are entitled to the very marked distinction of being the most manly in their conduct in its relation to the whites. The integrity of their friendship has been tested on many occasions, and they have never proved false to their protestations. Their chiefs declare that a Crow was never known to kill a white man excepting in self-defence.

As has been the fate of the North American savage since that dark December day when the Pilgrims landed on Plymouth Rock, the

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[1] The name of the Crows is not the correct appellation of the tribe. They have never yet acknowledged the name, though as such are officially recognized by the United States government. It was conferred upon

Crows have been driven year after year from one of the most beautiful natural regions on the continent. Not only have the whites been the usurpers, but both the Sioux and the Cheyennes have been instrumental in confining them to a constantly decreasing area, until now the remnant of a once great nation is the ward of the government, and located on a limited reservation.

To prove that Ab-sa-ra-ka, as the tribe designated their beautiful hunting-grounds, was rightly named, it is only necessary to quote a conversation which took place at a council held at Fort Philip Kearny, in July, 1866, when the following question was asked of Black-Horse, the Wolf-That-Lies-Down, Red-Arm, and Dull-Knife: —

"Why do the Sioux and Cheyennes claim the land which belongs to the Crows?" To which these chiefs answered: —

"The Sioux helped us. We stole the hunting-grounds of the Crows because they were the best. The white man is along the great waters, and we wanted more room. We fight the Crows because they will not take half and give us peace with the other half."

It is claimed that the Crows sprang from the Gros Ventres of the Missouri, whose language they speak. The Gros Ventres were a very weak tribe, or band, who had, by incessant wars with the surrounding tribes, become reduced to a very insignificant number of warriors. It is alleged, according to their tradition, that the Crows became a separate nation nearly two hundred years ago, because the tribe was becoming too numerous.

In the early years of the century the head chief of the

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them in the early days by the interpreters, either through ignorance of the language, or for the purpose of ridicule. The name which they themselves acknowledge, and they recognize no other, is in their language Ap-sah-ro-kee, which signifies the Sparrow Hawk people.

Crows was A-ra-poo-ash. The celebrated Jim Beckwourth[1] had already become a leader among the Crows, and shortly after the death of A-ra-poo-ash was unanimously chosen in his place.

The Blackfeet were always very persistent and unrelenting enemies of the Crows, and some of the most bloody combats recorded in savage warfare occurred between these two tribes.

Once, while in the Crow village, a party of Blackfeet, numbering thirty or forty, came stealing through the Crow country, killing every straggler, and carrying off every horse they could lay their hands on. The Crow warriors immediately started after them and pressed them so closely that they could not escape. The Blackfeet then threw up a semicircular breastwork of logs at the foot of a precipice, and awaited the approach of their enemies. Logs and sticks were piled up four or five feet in front of them, which thoroughly protected them. The Crows might have swept over this breastwork and exterminated the Blackfeet; but though outnumbering them, they did not dream of storming the little fortification. Such a proceeding would have been altogether repugnant to the savage notion of warfare. Whooping and yelling, and jumping from side to side like devils incarnate, they poured a shower of bullets and arrows upon the logs, yet not a Blackfoot was hurt; but several of the Crows, in spite of their antics, were shot down. In that ridiculous manner the fight continued for an hour or two. Now and then a Crow warrior, in an ecstasy of valour and vainglory, would scream forth his war-song, declare himself the bravest and greatest of all Indians, grasp his hatchet, strike it wildly upon the breastwork, and then, as he retreated to his companions, fall dead, riddled with arrows; yet no combined attack was made, the Blackfeet remaining secure in their intrenchment. At last Jim Beckwourth lost patience: —

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[1] Beckwourth was a mulatto born in Virginia in 1798. He was of medium height, of strong muscular power, quick of apprehension, very active, and one of the greatest warriors the Crow Nation has ever produced. Around his neck he wore a perforated bullet, with a large oblong bead on each side of it, secured by a thread of sinew. He wore this amulet during the whole time he was chief of the Crows. He was one of the few honest Indian traders of whom history gives any account.

"You are all a set of fools and old women," cried he; "come with me, if any of you are brave enough, and I'll show you how to fight."

Beckwourth instantly threw off his trapper's suit of buckskin, stripping himself naked as were the Indians themselves. Throwing his rifle on the ground, he grasped a small hatchet, and running over the prairie to the right, hidden by a hollow from the eyes of the Blackfeet, he climbed up the rocks and reached the top of the precipice behind them. Forty or fifty young warriors followed him. By the cries and whoops that arose from below, Beckwourth knew that the Blackfeet were just beneath him; then running forward,.he leaped from the rock right in the midst of the surprised savages. As he fell, he caught one of the Blackfeet by his long, loose hair, and dragging him toward him, buried his hatchet in his brain. Then grasping another by the belt at his waist, he struck him a stunning blow, and gaining his feet, shouted the Crow war-cry. He swung his hatchet so fiercely around him that the astonished Blackfeet crowded back and gave him room. He might, had he chosen, have leaped over the breastwork and escaped; but this was not necessary, for with devilish yells the remainder of the Crow warriors came dropping in quick succession over the rock, and rallied around him.

The convulsive struggle within the breastwork was frightful; for a few moments the Blackfeet fought and yelled like pent-up tigers; but the butchery was complete, and the mangled bodies lay piled together under the precipice. Not a Blackfoot made his escape.

In 1833 a band of Blackfeet, superior in numbers to the Crows, most unmercifully whipped them. On their return to their village one night in August, shortly after the fight, there was a grand display of meteoric showers, and although the Crow warriors were ready to face death in any form, the wonderful celestial display appalled them. They regarded it as the wrath of the Great Spirit showered visibly upon them. In their terrible fright, they, of course, looked to their chief for some explanation of it. But as Beckwourth himself was as much struck with the wonderful occurrence, he was equally at a loss with his untutored followers to account for the remarkable spectacle.

Evidently, he knew, he must augur some result from it, though his own dejected spirit did not prompt him to deduce a very encouraging one. He thought of all the impostures that are practised upon the credulous, and his imagination suggested some brilliant figures to his mind. He thought at first of declaring to them that the Great Spirit was pleased with the expedition, and was lighting the band on its way with spirit lamps; or that the meteors were the spirits of departed braves, coming to assist their worldly brothers in another impending fight; but he was not sanguine enough of possible results to indulge in any attractive oratory. He merely informed his warriors that he had not time to consult his medicine, but that as soon as he could he would interpret the miracle in full.

When his band of warriors arrived at the village, he found all of the people's minds still agitated with fear at the late phenomenon. Every one was talking of it with wonder and amazement, and the chief's opinion was demanded at once; they were expecting it, and wanted to know what the consequences were to be. Admonished by his recent defeat, Beckwourth now had no trouble in reading the stars. He told his warriors that they had evidently offended the Great Spirit; that it was because of his wrath they had suffered defeat in their excursion to the Blackfeet country, and returned with the loss of twenty-three warriors. He then told them that a sacrifice must be made to appease the wrath of the Great Spirit, and he recommended that a solemn council be convened and a national oblation be offered up.

Beckwourth knew that he was doing an absurd thing, but the superstition of the people demanded it, and he must cater to their desires because it was popular.

The camp where the Crows then were was a mourning-camp, in which, according to their religion, "medicine" would have no effect. The camp was, therefore, moved to another place, about ten miles distant, in order to properly offer up the sacrifice.

All the leading men and braves assembled in council, and Beckwourth, as their great medicine-man, was consulted as to what kind of an offering should be made which would effect its purpose of appeasing the wrath that was consuming the tribe.

Beckwourth retired for a while from the council, telling the chiefs he must consult his medicine. Returning in a short time, he ordered them to bring out the great medicine kettle, which was of brass, capable of holding ten gallons, and was worth ten buffalo-robes. It was then ordered to be polished until it shone as bright as the sun's face. That being done, Beckwourth ordered the warriors to throw in all the most costly and highly prized trinkets, or whatever they cherished most dearly. It was soon filled with the band's choicest treasures. Keepsakes, fancy-work, in which months of patient toil had been expended, knick-knacks, jewels, and rings so highly regarded that the costliest gems of emperors seemed poor in comparison. All these were thrown into the kettle willingly, along with a bountiful contribution of fingers[1] until it could hold no more. Then weights were attached to it, when it was carried to an air-hole in the ice where the river was very deep, and there sunk with becoming ceremony, young maidens habited in the best apparel bearing the burden.

The great sacrifice completed, the minds of the people were relieved, and the result of the next war-party was anxiously looked forward to, to learn if the oblation was accepted by the Great Spirit. The crying and lamentations continued, however, unabated, so much to the derangement of Beckwourth's nervous system that if he could, he would have gladly retired from the village to seek some less dolorous companionship.

The incantations seemed to have had a good effect, for on another expedition shortly afterward the war-party returned with lots of scalps and thirteen hundred horses, which they had stolen from the Blackfeet.[2]

The Crows enjoyed a practical joke as well as their more humorous white brethren, as the following incident will attest.

In the summer of 1842 a war-party of about two hundred Crows invaded the Sioux country by way of Laramie Pass, penetrating as far as Fort Platte and beyond, in pursuit of the enemy.

A few miles above the fort, they stopped a lone Frenchman, an employee of one of the fur companies, who was

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[1] Disfigurement of the body and dismemberment of the fingers, as an observance of mourning, was common among all Indian tribes. Sometimes upon the death of a warrior in battle his horse was cut and slashed, "to make him feel sorry for the loss of his master."

[2] During the sessions of the Peace Commission at Fort Laramie in 1866, Beckwourth was sent on a mission to consult with the chiefs of the Crows. He was taken sick in one of their villages and died there, probably from old age rather than disease.

CAMPING ON THE PLATTE

rather new to the region, and also green in everything that pertains to Indian methods. They began by signs to inquire the trail of the Sioux (the sign for that tribe being a transverse pass of the right front finger across the throat), which the poor Frenchman interpreted as their intention to cut his. He immediately began to bellow like a calf, accompanying himself with an industrious number of crosses, and a most earnest prayer to the Virgin to graciously save him from his impending fate.

The savages, noticing his strange conduct, and regarding it as an evidence of fear, were disposed to have a little fun at his expense. Then mounting him upon one of their spare horses, they tied his hands and feet, and led him to one of the trading-posts of the American Fur Company, as a prisoner.

The gates of the fort were, of course, closed, but the Crows demanded immediate admittance, declaring they wanted to trade. What goods were wanted by them? was asked by the officer in charge; to which the leader of the savages replied, tobacco.

"What have you got to trade for it?" was then asked.

"A white man," was the answer.

"A white man?" asked the surprised commander. "What do you want for him?"

"Oh! he is not worth much. A plug of tobacco is his full value!" was the response by nearly all the warriors.

The commandant, seeing through the savage joke, and on recognizing the unfortunate Frenchman, told the Indians they might possibly find a market for him at the other fort. He did not want to purchase.

The savages paraded around the walls of the post for a few minutes, and with a salutation of terrible war-whoops, dashed off for Fort Platte.

When they reached Fort Platte, having tumbled two platforms of their dead enemies on the trail,[1] they told the same story to the commanding officer, who felt disposed to humour their joke and accordingly gave the tobacco to the savages. Upon this they turned over the Frenchman, nearly frightened to death, and rode away in pursuit of the Sioux.

Many years ago a missionary went among the Crows. He was admitted to an audience of the leading men, and commenced, through an interpreter, to tell them the story how sin first came into the world, and how all men had become bad, whether white or red. Then he proceeded to explain the principles of Christianity, telling the savages that he had come among them to do them good, to show them how to be happy, and declaring that unless they listened to him and worshipped the Good Spirit as he instructed them, they could never reach that happy country into which good people alone found admittance after death.

A venerable chief then arose and said: "My white brother is a stranger to us. He talks evil of us, and he talks evil of his own people. He does this because he is ignorant. He thinks my people, like his, are wicked. Thus far he is wrong. Who were they who killed the very good man of whom he tells us? None of them were red men! The red man will die for his friends — he will not kill them! Let my paleface brother talk to the white man. His own people — they are very bad. He says he would do us good! He does us no good to chide us and say we are bad. True, we are bad — and were we as bad as the palefaces, it would become us to listen to him. Would my brother do us good? Then let him tell us how to make powder and we will believe in the sincerity of his profession — but let him not belie us by saying we are bad, like the palefaces!"

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[1] The Sioux bury their dead on platforms erected seven or eight feet above the ground.

The Crows also have their legends of enchantment, as have other tribes.

Once upon a time a party of Crow Indians were out hunting the buffalo, and they had with them a blind man. As he was a great hindrance to them, they put up a teepee on the bank of the Stinking Water for him, and told him to remain there until they returned.

They left him something to eat and built a fire for him. Then they drove a stake in the ground and stretched a lariat to the Stinking Water so that he could drink, and they also stretched another lariat to the timber, and told him to follow that and he could get wood. Thus they left him, and shortly after their departure another party of Crows came along, and they, too, had a blind man with them; so they concluded to follow the example of the first party, and leave him to keep the first blind man company.

The two blind men sat down and spent their time in telling stories; but the two hunting-parties were detained, and the two blind men ran out of provisions, and became very hungry. They sat at their fire and wondered what they should do for something to eat. Finally they could stand it no longer, and one of them suggested that they go down to the river and catch a fish to eat.

"No," said the other; "Sak-a-war-te (the Great Spirit of the Crows) told our people to hunt the buffalo, and it would make him very angry for us to catch and eat fish;" but hunger getting the better of him, he consented.

They went down to the water, and it was not long before they caught a large fish. They came back to their teepee, made a fire, and proceeded to cook their fish. They were sitting on either side of the fire talking, and when the fish was done, Sak-a-war-te came quietly in and took the fish out of the pot over the fire. Soon they discovered that their fish was gone, and then they began to accuse each other of having taken it. From words they came to blows, and while they were fighting, Sak-a-war-te was standing there and laughing at them. At last he spoke to them and told them to stop fighting — that he, Sak-a-war-te, had taken the fish to try them.

He then said that they were bad Indians; they had broken his commands to his people, which was to kill only the buffalo. But he said he would try them again. He told them to go to the Stinking Water, and take some mud and rub it on their eyes, then to wash it off and they would see. Then he told them they must obey him and go hunt the buffalo. Then he left them.

They did as he told them to do, and in a short time they could see. Then they sat down and talked over matters; but their hunger increasing and the hunting-parties not returning, they at last were compelled to go down to the river and catch another fish.

They had no sooner landed a fish than they both lost their sight again. In remorse they sat by their fire once more, and again Sak-a-war-te came to them, and told them what bad Indians they had been, but said he would try them once more. So he told them a second time to go down to the river, to take mud and apply it to their eyes, then wash it off, and when they had received their sight, they should never again take fish, for if they did they would become blind and never again recover their sight. They must hunt only the buffalo. They did as the Great Spirit had told them to do, and immediately received their sight once more. Then they went and made them bows and arrows, as Sak-a-war-te had said they should, and while they were thus employed, their friends returned from the hunt and gave them food. The hunters were very much surprised to find that the men had recovered their sight, and when they were told how it was accomplished, all said they would ever after be good Indians and hunt only the buffalo.

The Blackfeet Indians are divided into three tribes, and each tribe again divided into Blackfeet, Bloods, and Piegans. This confederation, while distinct, is regarded as a nation, and one of the stipulations was that there should never be any clashing between them; but notwithstanding this there have been many bloody fights.

According to tradition, they once lived much farther east and north, near the Saskatchewan country. Two or three hundred years ago they were driven from there by hostile tribes, and they slowly moved to the Rocky Mountains, where they have remained.

Their country, like that of the Crows, is a magnificent region — a perfect paradise for a people who subsisted wholly on wild game. Such subsistence was a necessity, too, for their mountainous range belongs to that arid portion of our mid-continent area where, without irrigation, it is doomed to a hopeless bondage of sterility. Millions of buffalo and antelope roamed the plains, and in the forest-fringed valleys and on the pine-clad divides, elk, deer, and mountain sheep flocked in immense numbers.

The characteristics of the Blackfeet were bravery, hardiness, and a ferocity that made them formidable enemies to the other tribes with which they were constantly at war. Particularly were they the everlasting foes of the Crows, from whom they stole horses by the wholesale; but very frequently the tables were turned, and the Crows retaliated, robbing the Blackfeet of thousands.

They were probably the best hunters of all the plains' tribes, and in the early days before their contact with the whites their weapons were of the most primitive character. They used merely bows with stone-pointed arrows, and they resorted to the most ingenious methods in order to capture the buffalo, which was their principal food. In fact, they subsisted almost entirely upon that great ruminant.

One of their plans to catch the huge beasts was known as the "pis-kun," literally meaning deep blood-kettle. It was really an immense corral, generally constructed just below a steep precipice, and its sides and ends enclosed by logs, stone, or brush — anything that came handy and answered the purpose. On the prairie above the precipice, wings extended out on either side, in shape of an open triangle. Into this the buffalo were carefully driven, and in their fright precipitated themselves over the brink.

The proceedings were always conducted with much ceremony, and involved a good deal of savage mummery. The sun, which was one of their deities, must be propitiated. The evening previous to the attempt to drive a herd of buffalo into the pis-kun, one of the medicine-men of the band commenced by praying to the sun for the success of the undertaking. He was the one to make the buffalo come, and early in the morning he got out his robes and started on his mission, after warning his wives that they must not show themselves, even by looking out of the door of the lodge, until he came back from his mission, but that they must constantly burn sweet grass as an offering to the god of the day.

He must necessarily fast when engaged in this duty, and when he was ready to make his appearance on the prairie the warriors all followed him, hiding themselves behind the temporary fence that bounded the pis-kun. He then dressed himself in a bonnet which was made of the head of a buffalo, and with a robe of the same animal thrown around him slowly approached the peacefully grazing herd.

Arriving in the immediate vicinity, the buffalo, attracted by the apparition, looked up. The medicine-man walked then very deliberately toward the opening of the pis-kun. Generally the buffalo began to follow him, and as he saw that they did so he increased his pace, the animals, whose curiosity was aroused, at the same time doing the same.

When the herd was securely within the corral, the hidden Indians suddenly rose from their places, yelling as only savages can, at the same instant shaking their robes, and the stampeded animals rushed headlong to their death over the precipice. Hundreds were instantly killed, while others were so dreadfully disabled as to make them an easy prey. Then commenced an indiscriminate skinning and cutting up, the chiefs and most noted warriors receiving the choicest meat.

As has been the fate of nearly all the Indian tribes west of the Missouri River, the smallpox made fearful inroads among the Blackfeet. It first appeared in 1845, and the tribe was decimated. In fact, it is said that the disease almost swept the plains of Indians. In 1757–1758, it again visited them, but was not so virulent as at its first appearance. The measles carried off thousands in 1864; and again, in 1869, the smallpox broke out in the Blackfeet villages. In 1883–1884, strange as it may appear, twenty-five per cent of the Piegan band actually died from hunger! The cause of this terrible disaster was that the buffalo had been driven from the Blackfoot country, or rather exterminated, and the tribe, which had ever wholly depended upon that animal for their subsistence, in a short time was reduced to a state of absolute starvation.

Like the buffalo, the once powerful Blackfeet are nearly all gone. The few left are living on a small reservation, and are somewhat self-sustaining. What a sad commentary! Fifty years ago the Blackfeet numbered over forty thousand warriors, and their name was a terror to the white man who had the temerity to travel through their country.

The Blackfoot account of creation is not a very definite one; portions of it are too vulgar for refined ears, but in it is to be found a story of a once great flood, which seems to be common to the cosmogony of all tribes.

The Sphynx · Echo Canon, Utah

CHAPTER XIV

FOLK-LORE OF BLACKFEET — THE LOST CHILDREN — THE WOLF-MAN — THE UTES — MASSACRE OF MAJOR THORNBURGH'S COMMAND ON THE WHITE RIVER — THE GREAT CHIEF OURAY — PIUTES — THEIR THEORIES OF THE HEAVENS — THE BIG MEDICINE SPRINGS — CLOSED HAND — MAN AFRAID OF HIS HORSES — NO KNIFE — SITTING BULL — SPOTTED TAIL

Ute Chief

THE folk-lore of the Blackfeet is very voluminous and full of humour. Of course, as in other tribes, superstition and enchantment make up the basis of their stories; and it will be noticed by the student of their traditions, that there is that same marked similarity to those related in the lodges of widely separated tribes, indicating a common origin for them all. Two of the more interesting of these tales are "The Lost Children" and "The Wolf-Man."

"Once a camp of people stopped on the bank of a river. There were but a few lodges of them. One day the little children in the camp crossed the river to play on the other side. For some time they stayed near the bank, and then they went up over a little hill and found a bed of sand and gravel; and there they played for a long time.

"There were eleven of these children. Two of them were daughters of the chief of the camp, and the smaller of these wanted the best of everything. If any child found a pretty stone she would try to take it for herself. The other children did not like this, and they began to tease the little girl, and to take her things away from her. Then she got angry and began to cry, and the more she cried the more the children teased her; so at last she and her sister left the others and went back to camp.

"When they got there they told their father what the other children had done to them, and this made the chief very angry. He thought for a little while and then got up and went out of the lodge, and called aloud, so that everybody might hear, saying: 'Listen! listen! Your children have teased my child and made her cry. Now we will move away and leave them behind. If they come back before we get started they shall be killed. If they follow us and overtake the camp they shall be killed. If the father and mother of any one of them take them into their lodge I will kill that father and mother. Hurry now, hurry and pack up, so that we can go. Everybody tear down the lodges as quickly as you can.'

"When the people heard this they felt very sorry, but they had to do as the chief said; so they tore down the lodges and quickly packed the dog travois, and started off. They packed in such a hurry that they left many little things lying in camp, — knives and awls, bone needles and moccasins.

"The little children played about in the sand for a long time, but at last they began to get hungry; and one little girl said to the others, 'I will go back to the camp and get some dried meat and bring it here, so that we may eat.' And she started to go to the camp. When she came to the top of the hill and looked across the river she saw that there were no lodges there, and did not know what to think of it. She called down to the children and said, 'The camp is gone;' but they did not believe her, and went on playing. She kept on calling and at last some of them came to her, and then all saw that it was as she had said. They went down to the river and crossed it, and went to where the lodges had stood. When they got there they saw on the ground the things that had been left out in the packing; and as each child saw and knew something that had belonged to its own parents it cried, and sang a little song, saying: 'Mother, here is your bone needle; why did you leave your children?' 'Father, here is your arrow; why did you leave your children?' It was very mournful, and they all cried.

"There was among them a little girl who had on her back her baby brother, whom she loved dearly. He was very young, a nursing child, and already he was hungry and beginning to fret. This little girl said to the others: 'We do not know why they have gone, but we know they have gone. We must follow the trail of the camp and try to catch up with them.' So the children started to follow the camp. They travelled on all day; and just at night they saw a little lodge near the trail. They had heard the people talk of a bad old woman who killed and ate people, and some of the children thought that this old woman might live here; and they were afraid to go to the lodge. Others said: 'Perhaps some one lives here who has a good heart. We are very tired and very hungry, and have nothing to eat, and no place to keep warm. Let us go to this lodge.'

"They went to it; and when they went in they saw an old woman sitting by the fire. She spoke kindly to them, and asked them where they were travelling; and they told her that the camp had moved on and left them, and that they were trying to find their people, that they had nothing to eat, and were tired and hungry. The old woman fed them and told them to sleep there to-night, and to-morrow they could go on and find their people. 'The camp,' she said, 'passed here to-day when the sun was low. They have not gone far. To-morrow you will overtake them.' She spread some robes on the ground and said: 'Now lie here and sleep. Lie side by side with your heads towards the fire, and when morning comes you can go on your journey.' The children lay down and soon slept.

"In the middle of the night the old woman got up and built a big fire, and put on it a big stone kettle full of water. Then she took a big knife, and, commencing at one end of the row, began to cut off the heads of the children, and to throw them into the pot. The little girl with the baby brother lay at the other end of the row, and while the old woman was doing this she awoke and saw what was taking place. When the old woman came near to her she jumped up and began to beg that she would not kill her. 'I am strong,' she said. 'I will work hard for you. I can bring your wood and water, and tan your skins. Do not kill my little brother and me. Take pity on us and save us alive. Everybody has left us, but do you have pity. You shall see how quickly I will work, how you will always have plenty of wood. I can work quickly and well.' The old woman thought for a little while, then she said: 'Well, I will let you live for a time, anyhow. You shall sleep safely to-night.'

"The next day, early, the little girl took her brother on her back, and went out and gathered a big pile of wood, and brought it to the lodge before the old woman was awake. When she got up she called to the girl, 'Go to the river and get a bucket of water.' The girl put her brother on her back, and took the bucket to go. The old woman said to her: 'Why do you carry that child everywhere? Leave him here.' The little girl said: 'Not so.

He is always with me, and if I leave him he will cry and make a great noise, and you will not like that.' The old woman grumbled, but the girl went on down to the river.

"When she got there, just as she was going to fill her bucket, she saw a great bull standing by her. It was a mountain buffalo, one of those which live in the timber; and the long hair of its head was all full of pine needles and sticks and branches, and matted together. (It was a *Su-ye-stu-mik*, a water-bull.) When the girl saw him, she prayed him to take her across the river, and so to save her and her little brother from the bad old woman. The bull said, 'I will take you across, but first you must take some of the sticks out of my head.' The girl begged him to start at once; but the bull said, 'No, first take the sticks out of my head.' The girl began to do it, but before she had done much she heard the old woman calling her to bring the water. The girl called back, 'I am trying to get the water clear,' and went on fixing the buffalo's head. The old woman called again, saying, 'Hurry, hurry with that water.' The girl answered, 'Wait, I am washing my little brother.' Pretty soon the old woman called out, 'If you don't bring that water, I will kill you and your brother.' By this time the girl had most of the sticks out of the bull's head, and he told her to get on his back, and went into the water and swam across the river. As he reached the other bank, the girl could see the old woman coming from her lodge down to the river with a big stick in her hand.

"When the bull reached the bank, the girl jumped off his back and started off on the trail of the camp. The bull swam back again to the other side of the river, and there stood the old woman. This bull was a sort of servant of the old woman. She said to him, 'Why did you take those children across the river? Take me on your back now and carry me across quickly, so that I may catch them.' But the bull said, 'First take these sticks out of my head.' 'No,' said the old woman; 'first take me across, then I will take the sticks out.' The bull repeated, 'First take the sticks out of my head, then I will take you across.' This made the old woman very angry, and she hit him with the stick she had in her hand; but when she saw that he would not go, she began to pull the sticks out of his head very roughly, tearing out great handfuls of hair, and every moment ordering him to go, and threatening what she would do to him when she got back. At last the bull took her on his back, and began to swim across with her, but he did not swim fast enough to please her; so she began to pound him with her club to make him go faster. When the bull got to the middle of the river he rolled over on his side, and the old woman slipped off, and was carried down the river and drowned.

"The girl followed the trail of the camp for several days, feeding on berries and roots that she dug; and at last one night after dark she overtook the camp. She went into the lodge of an old woman who was camped off at one side, and the old woman pitied her and gave her some food, and told her where her father's lodge was. The girl went to it, but when she went in her parents would not receive her. She had tried to overtake them for the sake of her little brother who was growing thin and weak because he had not been fed properly; and now her mother was afraid to let her stay with them. She even went and told the chief that her children had come back; he was angry, and he ordered that the next day they should be tied to a post in the camp, and that the people should move on and leave them there. 'Then,' he said, 'they cannot follow us.'

"When the old woman who had pitied the children heard what the chief had ordered, she made up a bundle of dried meat, and hid it in the grass near the camp. Then she called her dog to her — a little curly dog. She said to the dog: 'Now listen. To-morrow when we are ready to start I will call you to come to me, but you must pay no attention to what I say. Run off and pretend to be chasing squirrels. I will try to catch you, and if I do so I will pretend to whip you; but do not follow me. Stay behind, and when the camp has passed out of sight, chew off the strings that bind those children. When you have done this, show them where I have hidden that food. Then you can follow the camp and overtake us.' The dog stood before the old woman and listened to all that she said, turning his head from side to side, as if paying close attention.

"Next morning it was done as the chief had said. The children were tied to the tree with rawhide strings, and the people tore down all the lodges and moved off. The old woman called her dog to follow her, but he was digging at a gopher hole and would not come. Then she went up to him and struck at him hard with her whip, but he dodged and ran away, and then stood looking at her. Then the old woman became very angry and cursed him, but he paid no attention; and finally she left him, and followed the camp. When the people had all passed out of sight, the dog went to the children and gnawed the strings which tied them until he had bitten them through. So the children were free.

"Then the dog was glad, and danced about and barked, and ran round and round. Pretty soon he came up to the little girl and looked up in her face, and then started away, trotting. Every little while he would stop and look back. The girl thought he wanted her to follow him. She did so, and he took her to where the bundle of dried meat was and showed it to her. Then, when he had done this, he jumped upon her and licked the baby's face, and then started off, running as hard as he could along the trail of the camp, never stopping to look back. The girl did not follow him. She now knew it was no use to go to the camp again. Their parents would not receive them, and the chief would perhaps order them to be killed.

"She went on her way, carrying her little brother and the bundle of dried meat. She travelled for many days and at last came to a place where she thought she would stop. Here she built a little lodge of poles and brush, and stayed there. One night she had a dream, and an old woman came to her, in the dream, and said to her, 'To-morrow take your little brother and tie him to one of the lodge poles, and the next day tie him to another, and so every day tie him to one of the poles until you have gone all around the lodge and have tied him to each pole. Then you will be helped, and will no longer have bad luck.'

"When the girl awoke in the morning she remembered what the dream had told her, and she bound her little brother to one of the lodge poles; and each day after this she tied him to one of the poles. Each day he grew larger, until, when she had gone all around the lodge, he was grown to be a fine young man.

"Now the girl was glad, and proud of her young brother who was so large and noble-looking. He was quiet, not speaking much, and sometimes for days he would not say anything. He seemed to be thinking all the time. One morning he told the girl that he had a dream and that he wished her to help him build a pis-kun. She was afraid to ask him about the dream, for she thought if she asked questions he might not like it. So she just said she was ready to do what he wished. They built the pis-kun, and when it was finished the boy said to his sister, 'The buffalo are to come to us, and you are not to see them. When the time comes you are to cover your head and to hold your face close to the ground; and do not lift your head nor look, until I throw a piece of kidney to you.' The girl said, 'It shall be as you say.'

"When the time came, the boy told her where to go; and she went to the place, a little way from the lodge, not far from the corral, and sat down on the ground, and covered her head, holding her face close to the earth. After she had sat there a little while, she heard the sound of animals running, and she was excited and curious, and raised her head to look; but she saw only her brother, standing near, looking at her. Before he could speak, she said to him, 'I thought I heard buffalo coming, and because I was anxious for food I forgot my promise and looked. Forgive me this time, and I will try again.' Again she bent her face to the ground, and covered her head.

"Soon she heard again the sound of animals running, at first a long way off, and then coming nearer and nearer, until at last they seemed close, and she thought they were going to run over her. She sprang up in fright and looked about, but there was nothing to be seen but her brother, looking sadly at her. She went close to him and said, 'Pity me. I was afraid, for I thought the buffalo were going to run over me.' He said, 'This is the last time. If again you look, we will starve; but if you do not look, we will always have plenty, and will never be without meat.' The girl looked at him and said, 'I will try hard this time, and even if those animals run right over me, I will not look until you throw the kidney to me.' Again she covered her head, pressing her face against the earth and putting her hands against her ears, so that she might not hear. Suddenly, sooner than she thought, she felt the blow from the meat thrown at her, and springing up, she seized the kidney and began to eat it. Not far away was her brother, bending over a fat cow; and, going up to him, she helped him with the butchering. After that was done, she kindled a fire and cooked the best parts of the meat, and they ate and were satisfied.

"The boy became a great hunter. He made fine arrows that went faster than a bird could fly, and when he was hunting he watched all the animals and all the birds, and learned their ways and how to imitate them when they called. While he was hunting, the girl dressed buffalo-hides and the skins of deer and other animals. She made a fine new lodge, and the boy painted it with figures of all the birds and the animals he had killed.

"One day, when the girl was bringing water, she saw a little way off a person coming. When she went in the lodge, she told her brother, and he went out to meet the stranger. He found that he was friendly and was hunting, but had had bad luck and killed nothing. He was starving and in despair, when he saw this lone lodge and made up his mind to go to it. As he came near it, he began to be afraid, and to wonder if the people who lived there were enemies or ghosts; but he thought, 'I may as well die here as starve,' so he went boldly to it. The strange person was very much surprised to see this handsome young man with the kind face, who could speak his own language. The boy took him into the lodge, and the girl put food before him. After he had eaten, he told his story, saying that the game had left them, and that many of his people were dying of hunger. As he talked, the girl listened; and at last she remembered the man, and knew that he belonged to her camp.

"She asked him some questions, and he talked about all the people in the camp, and even spoke of the old woman who owned the dog. The boy advised the stranger, after he had rested, to return to his camp and tell the people to move up to this place, that here they would find plenty of game. After he had gone, the boy and his sister talked of these things. The girl had often told him what she had suffered, what the chief had said and done, and how their own parents had turned against her, and that the only person whose heart had been good to her was this old woman. As the young man heard all this again, he was angry at his parents and the chief, but he felt great kindness for the old woman and her dog. When he learned that those bad people were living, he made up his mind that they should suffer and die.

"When the strange man reached his own camp, he told the people how well he had been treated by these two persons, and that they wished him to bring the whole camp to them, and that there they should have plenty.

"This made great joy in the camp, and all got ready to move. When they reached the lost children's camp, they found everything as the stranger had said. The brother gave a feast; and to those whom he liked he gave many presents, but to the old woman and the dog he gave the best presents of all. To the chief nothing at all was given, and this made him very much ashamed. To the parents no food was given, but the boy tied a bone to the lodge poles above the fire, and told the parents to eat from it without touching it with their hands. They were very hungry, and tried to eat from this bone; and as they were stretching out their necks to reach it — for it was above them — the boy cut off their heads with his knife. This frightened all the people, the chief most of all; but the boy told them how it all was, and how he and his sister had survived.

"When he had finished speaking, the chief said he was sorry for what he had done, and he proposed to his people that this young man should be made their chief. They were glad to do this. The boy was made the chief, and lived long to rule the people in that camp."

The story of the Wolf-Man runs as follows: —

"There was once a man who had two bad wives. They had no shame. The man thought if he moved away where there were no other people, he might teach these women to become good, so he moved his lodge away off on the prairie. Near where they camped was a high butte, and every evening about sundown the man would go up on top of it, and look all over the country to see where the buffalo were feeding, and if any enemies were approaching. There was a buffalo-skull on the hill, which he used to sit on.

"'This is very lonesome,' said one woman to the other, one day. 'We have no one to talk with, nor to visit.'

"'Let us kill our husband,' said the other. 'Then we will go back to our relations and have a good time.'

"Early in the morning the man went out to hunt, and as soon as he was out of sight, his wives went up on top of the butte. There they dug a deep pit, and covered it over with light sticks, grass, and dirt, and placed the buffalo-skull on top.

"In the afternoon they saw their husband coming home, loaded down with meat he had killed. So they hurried to cook for him. After eating, he went up on the butte and sat down on the skull. The slender sticks gave way, and he fell into the pit. His wives were watching him, and when they saw him disappear, they took down the lodge, packed everything on the dog travois, and moved off, going toward the main camp. When they got near it, so that the people could hear them, they began to cry and mourn.

"'Why is this?' they were asked. 'Why are you in mourning? Where is your husband?'

"'He is dead,' they replied. 'Five days ago he went out on a hunt, and he never came back.' And they cried and mourned again.

"When the man fell into the pit, he was hurt. After a while he tried to get out, but he was so badly bruised he could not climb up. A wolf travelling along came to the pit and saw him, and pitied him. 'Ah-h-w-o-o-o-o! Ah-h-w-o-o-o-o!' he howled, and when the other wolves heard him they all came running to see what was the matter. There came also many coyotes, badgers, and kit-foxes.

"'In this hole,' said the wolf, 'is my find. Here is a fallen-in man. Let us dig him out, and we will have him for our brother.'

"They all thought the wolf spoke well, and began to dig. In a little while they had a hole close to the man. Then the wolf who found him said, 'Hold on; I want to speak a few words to you.' All the animals listening, he continued, 'We will all have this man for our brother, but I found him, so I think he ought to live with us big wolves.' All the others said that this was well; so the wolf went into the hole, and, tearing down the rest of the dirt, dragged out the almost dead man. They gave him a kidney to eat, and when he was able to walk a little, the big wolves took him to their home. Here there was a very old blind wolf, who had powerful medicine. He cured the man, and made his head and hands look like those of a wolf. The rest of his body was not changed.

"In those days the people used to make holes in the pis-kun walls and set snares, and when wolves and other animals came to steal meat, they were caught by the neck. One night the wolves all went down to the pis-kun to steal meat, and when they got close to it, the man-wolf said, 'Stand here a little. I will go down and fix the places, so you will not be caught.' He went on and sprung all the snares; then he went back and called the wolves and others, — the coyotes, badgers, and foxes, — and they all went in the pis-kun and feasted, and took meat to carry home.

"In the morning the people were surprised to find the meat gone, and their nooses all drawn out. They wondered how it could have been done. For many nights the nooses were drawn and the meat stolen; but once, when the wolves went there to steal, they found only the meat of a scabby bull, and the man-wolf was angry, and cried out, 'Bad-you-give-us-o-o-o! Bad-you-give-us-o-o-o!'

"The people heard him and said, 'It is a man-wolf who has done all this. We will catch him.' So they put pemmican and nice back fat in the pis-kun, and many hid close by. After dark the wolves came again, and when the man-wolf saw the good food, he ran to it and began eating. Then the people all rushed in and caught him with ropes and took him to a lodge. When they got inside to the light of the fire, they knew at once who it was. They said, 'This is the man who was lost.'

"'No,' said the man, 'I was not lost. My wives tried to kill me. They dug a deep hole, and I fell into it, and I was hurt so badly that I could not get out; but the wolves took pity on me and helped me, or I would have died there.'

"When the people heard this they were angry, and they told the man to do something.

"'You say well,' he replied. 'I give those women to the *I-kun-uh-kah-tsi*; they know what to do.'

"After that night the two women were never seen again."[1]

"The Utes are strictly mountain Indians. They were a fierce, warlike tribe, and for years continuously raided the sparse settlements at the base of the Rocky Mountains on both their slopes. They were known to the Spaniards early in the seventeenth century. The Utah Nation is an integral part of the great Shoshone family, of which there are a number of bands, or tribes, — the Pah-Utes, or Py-Utes, the Pi-Utes, the Gosh-Utes, or Goshutes, the Pi-Edes, the Uinta-Utes, the Yam-Pah-Utes, besides others not necessary to enumerate.

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[1] For the best and most authentic collection of Indian Folk-lore, see George Bird Grinnel's admirable volumes on the subject.

"The word Utah originated with the people inhabiting the mountain region early in the seventeenth century, when New Mexico was first talked of by the Spanish conquerors. Pah signifies water; *Pah-guampe*, salt water, or salt lake; Pah-Utes, Indians that live about the water. The word was spelled in various ways, 'Yutas' by the early Spaniards. This is perhaps the proper way. Other spellings are 'Youta,' 'Eutaw,' 'Utaw,' and 'Utah,' which is now the accepted one."[1]

The Utes, unquestionably, were the Indians concerned in the "Mountain Meadows Massacre." The Utes, too, were the tribe that committed the atrocities at their agency, killing the Meeker family and others there, finishing their deeds of murder by the massacre of Major T. T. Thornburgh's command on the White River in 1879. The terrible story is worth recounting: —

"Major T. T. Thornburgh, commanding officer of the Fourth United States Infantry, at Fort Fred Steele on the Union Pacific Railroad in Wyoming, was placed in charge of the expedition which left Rawlins for White River Agency, September 24. The command consisted of two companies, D and F of the Fifth Cavalry, and Company E of the Fourth Infantry, the officers included in the detachment being Captains Payne and Lawson of the Fifth Cavalry, Lieutenant Paddock of the Third Cavalry, and Lieutenants Price and Wooley of the Fourth Infantry, with Dr. Grimes accompanying the command as surgeon. Following the troops was a supply-train of thirty-three wagons.

"When the command reached the place known as Old

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[1] Bancroft.

Fortification Camp, Company E of the Fourth Infantry, with Lieutenant Price in command, was dropped from the command, the design of this step being to afford protection to passing supply-trains, and to act as a reserve in case there was demand for it. Major Thornburgh turned his face toward the Indian country in deep earnest, with the balance of his command consisting of the three cavalry companies numbering about one hundred and sixty men.

"Having been directed to use all despatch in reaching the agency, the major marched forward with as great rapidity as possible. The route selected is not well travelled, and is mountainous, and of course the troops did not proceed so rapidly as they might have done on more familiar highways.

"Nothing was seen of or heard from the Indians until Bear River was reached; this runs north of the reservation and almost parallel with the northern line. At the crossing of this stream, about sixty-five miles from White River Agency, ten Indians, headed by two Ute chiefs, Colorow and Jack, made their appearance. They were closely questioned, but professed great friendliness for the whites and would betray none of the secrets of their tribe. They declared that they were merely out on a hunt, and repeated that they were friends of the white man and of the Great Father's government, and especially of the Great Father's soldiers.

"After this parley, which took place September 26, Thornburgh sent his last telegram from camp: 'Have met some of the Ute chiefs here. They seem friendly and promise to go with me to the agency. They say the Utes don't understand why we came here. I have tried to explain satisfactorily; don't now anticipate any trouble.' The conclusion is that Thornburgh was one of the most prudent and discreet of officers, but that he was thrown off his guard by the savages.

"The march was continued and nothing more was seen of the Indians though a close watch by keen-eyed scouts was kept up for them, until Williams' Fork, a small tributary of Bear River, was reached, when the same ten Indians first seen again quite suddenly and very mysteriously appeared. They renewed their protestations of friendship, while they covertly and critically eyed the proportions of the command. They made a proposition to the commander that he take an escort of five soldiers and accompany them to the agency. A halt was called and Major Thornburgh summoned his staff to a consultation. After carefully discussing the matter with a due regard for the importance, the advantage, and disadvantage of the step, the officers' council came to the conclusion that it was not wise to accept this proffer on the part of the Indians, as it might lead to another Modoc trap, and to Thornburgh's becoming another Canby. Thornburgh's scout, Mr. Joseph Rankin, was especially strong in opposition to the request of the Indians.

"Major Thornburgh then concluded to march his column within hailing distance of the agency, where he would accept the proposition of the Indians. But he was never allowed to carry out his designs. Here it became apparent how thin the disguise of friendship had been, and Thornburgh was soon convinced how fatal would have been the attempt for him, accompanied by only five men, to treat with them.

"The command had reached the point where the road crosses Milk River, another tributary of the Bear River, inside the reservation and in the limits of Summit County, about twenty-five miles north of the agency, when they were attacked by the hostiles, numbering, it is believed, between two hundred and fifty and three hundred warriors, who had been lying in ambush.

"The scene of the attack was peculiarly fitted for the

Indian method of warfare. When Thornburgh's command entered the ravine or cañon they found themselves between two bluffs thirteen hundred yards apart. Those on the north were two hundred feet high, those on the south one hundred feet. The road to the agency ran through the ravine in a southeasterly direction, following the bend of the Milk River, at a distance of five hundred yards. Milk River is a narrow, shallow stream, which here flows in a southwesterly direction, passing through a narrow cañon. Through this cañon, after making a detour to avoid some very difficult ground, the wagon-road passes for three or four miles. Along the stream is a growth of cottonwood trees; but its great advantage as an ambuscade lies in the narrowness of the cañon. On the top of the two ranges of bluffs the Indians had intrenched themselves in a series of pits, so that when the troops halted at the first volley, they stood between two fires at a range of only six hundred and fifty yards from either bluff.

"The battle took place on the morning of September 29. The locality of the ambush had been known as Bad Cañon, but it will hereafter be described as Thornburgh's Pass. Lieutenant Cherry discovered the ambush, and was ordered by Major Thornburgh to hail the Indians. He took fifteen men of E Company for this work. Major Thornburgh's orders were not to make the first fire on the Indians, but to wait an attack from them. After the Indians and Cherry's hailing party had faced each other for about ten minutes, Mr. Rankin, the scout, who was an old Indian fighter, seeing the danger in which the command was placed, hurried direct to Major Thornburgh's side and requested him to open fire on the enemy, saying at the same time that that was their only hope. Major Thornburgh replied: —

"'My God! I dare not; my orders are positive, and if

I violate them and survive, a court-martial and ignominious dismissal may follow. I feel as though myself and men were to be murdered.'

"Major Thornburgh, with Captain Payne, was riding at the head of the column; Company F, Fifth Cavalry, in advance; Lieutenant Lawson commanding next; and D Company, Fifth Cavalry, Lieutenant Paddock commanding, about a mile and a half to the rear, in charge of the wagon-train.

"Cherry had moved out at a gallop with his men from the right flank, and noticed a like movement of about twenty Indians from the left of the Indians' position. He approached to within two hundred yards of the Indians and took off his hat and waved it, but the response was a shot fired at him, wounding a man of the party and killing his horse. This was the first shot, and was instantly followed by a volley from the Indians. The work had now begun in real earnest, and seeing the advantage of the position he then held, Cherry dismounted his detachment and deployed along the crest of the hill to prevent the Indians flanking his position, or to cover his retreat if found necessary to retire upon the wagon-train, which was then coming up slowly, guarded by Lieutenant Paddock's company, D, Fifth Cavalry.

"Orders were sent to pack the wagons and cover them, with the company guarding them. The two companies in advance were Captain Payne's company, F, Fifth Cavalry, and Lieutenant Lawson's company, E, Third Cavalry, which were dismounted and deployed as skirmishers, Captain Payne on the left and Lieutenant Lawson on the right.

"From Cherry's position he could see that the Indians were trying to cut him off from the wagons, and at once sent word to Major Thornburgh, who then withdrew the line slowly, keeping the Indians in check until opposite the point which his men had, when, seeing that the Indians were concentrating to cut off his retreat, Captain Payne, with Company F, Fifth Cavalry, was ordered to charge the hill, which he did in gallant style, his horse being shot under him and several of his men wounded.

"The Indians being driven from this point, the company was rallied on the wagon-train. Major Thornburgh then gave orders to Cherry to hold his position and cover the retreat of Lieutenant Lawson, who was ordered to fall back slowly with the company horses of his company.

"Cherry called for volunteers of twenty men, who responded promptly and fought with desperation. Nearly every man was wounded before he reached camp, and two men were killed. Cherry brought every wounded man in with him. Lieutenant Lawson displayed the greatest coolness and courage during this retreat, sending up ammunition to Cherry's men when once they were nearly without it.

"Simultaneously with the attack on Thornburgh's advance the Indians swept in between the troops and the wagon-train, which was protected by D Company, Lieutenant Paddock commanding. The desperate situation of the soldiers in the ravine was at once apparent to every officer and man in the ambush. The soldiers fought valiantly, desperately, and the Indians shrank under the terrible counter fire. A more complete trap could not be contrived, for the troops were not only outnumbered, but exposed to a galling fire from the bluffs, over the edge of which it was impossible to reach the foe, as the range of sight would, of course, carry bullets clean over the Indian pits.

"Major Thornburgh was here and there and everywhere, directing the attack, the defence, and later the retreat. He was constantly exposed to fire, and the wonder is that his intrepidity did not win his death ere it did. Captain Payne and his company, under orders from Thornburgh, fell back to a knoll, followed by Lieutenant Lawson and company, the retreat being covered by Lieutenant Cherry's command. Hemmed in at both outlets of the pass and subjected to a steady deathly fire from the heights on either side, the troops were melting down under the savage massacre.

"Major Thornburgh, seeing the terrible danger in which his command was placed from the position of the Indians, at once mounted about twenty men, and at the head of them he dashed forward with a valour unsurpassed by Napoleon at the Bridge of Lodi, and made a charge on the savages between the command and the train.

"It was in this valorous dash that Thornburgh met his fate, thirteen of his bold followers also being killed, the gallant leader falling within four hundred yards of the wagons. The remainder of the command, then in retreat for the train corral, followed the path led by Thornburgh and his men. As Captain Payne's company was about to start, or had started, his saddle-girth broke and he got a fearful fall. One of his men dismounted and assisted him on his horse, the captain's horse having run away. F Company, Fifth, followed by the captain, he being badly bruised, reached the wagon-train to find it being packed, and Lieutenant Paddock wounded, and fighting the Indians. Lieutenants Lawson and Cherry fell back slowly with their companies dismounted and fighting all the way, every man doing his duty.

"The stubborn resistance of Lieutenant Cherry in covering the retreat gave time for the troops at the train to form temporary breastworks of men's bundles, flour, sacks of corn, wagons, and dead horses. When the last detachment had reached the Paddock corral the soldiers fought intrenched, horses being shot down rapidly and the foe settling into position on all the high points about them. Captain Payne, who by Thornburgh's death came into command, drew up eight of the wagons and ranged them as a sort of a breastwork along the northern and eastern sides of an oval, at the same time cutting transverse trenches on the western and southern points of the oval, along the line of which the men posted themselves. Inside the oval eight more wagons were drawn up for the purpose of corralling the animals, and there was also a pit provided for sheltering the wounded. Behind the pits ran a path to the nearest bend of Milk River, which was used for obtaining water. The command held its position until 8.30 o'clock that night, when the Indians withdrew.

"In the engagement there were twelve soldiers killed and forty-two wounded. Every officer in the command was shot with the exception of Lieutenant Cherry, of the Fifth Cavalry. The Indians killed from one hundred and fifty to two hundred mules belonging to the government. Surgeon Grimes was wounded but was able for duty. The troops had about six days' supplies." [1]

One of the greatest chiefs of the Ute Nation was Ouray. His character was marked by its keen perception, and ideas of right and wrong, according to a strictly Christian code. He was bold, and an uncompromising protector of the rights of his tribe, and equally as earnest in his endeavours to impress upon the minds of the Indians that the whites were their friends. He was renowned for his wisdom rather than for his bravery, which is the test of greatness among savages. He was brave, too, but that did not, in his own conception, complete the qualities which a leader should possess. His tribe during the period of his chieftainship had five battles with the Arapahoes and several with the Sioux and Cheyennes. It was a bloody war between the

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[1] This account is taken from files of the Denver newspapers published at the time of the massacre.

Indians of the plains and the mountains, between highlanders and lowlanders, and in these struggles Ouray became a renowned warrior.

During some of these battles with the Arapahoes, Ouray led as many as seven hundred warriors into the field. At one time he had but thirty braves with him, while the enemy numbered nearly eight hundred. The Arapahoes came upon the Utes one morning just about daylight, surprising them completely. Ouray rallied his small force, however, formed them into a square, and after retreating a short distance, fighting continuously for fourteen hours, succeeded in repulsing his foes.

The story of his life is an interesting one. He says that he was born in Taos Valley in New Mexico, near the Pueblo village of that name, in 1839. The band to which he belonged spent a great deal of its time in the Taos Valley, San Luis Park, and along the base of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. In that region they were accustomed to meet the Apaches, who came from the south. It was a common thing for a tribe of Indians to marry out of their own. Ouray's father married an Apache woman, hence the epithet so often sneeringly applied to the chief, by those who did not like him, of "He's an Apache pappoose."

His band became so accustomed to association with the Mexicans that some of them began to adopt the customs of that people, and when Ouray's father and mother decided to wed, they were married in the little adobe church on a hill in the village at the Red River Crossing. A priest performed the ceremony according to the Catholic ritual. When Ouray was born, he was taken to the same building and baptized into the Catholic faith.[1]

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[1] Ouray did not profess the Catholic religion, despite his early training. He believed in the Ute god, and in a happy hunting-ground, and also in a bad place, where wicked people cannot meet their friends.

Ouray was not head chief at first; but his influence increased so fast with the other bands of the tribe, that, in the year of President Lincoln's death, he was declared head chief of the whole Ute Nation.

Ouray resided in a neatly built adobe house erected for him by the government; it was nicely carpeted and furnished in modern style. He owned a farm of three hundred acres, a real garden spot. Of these he cultivated a hundred, owned a large number of horses, cattle, and sheep, and rode in a carriage presented to him by Governor McCook of Colorado. He hired labourers from among the Mexicans and Indians. He was very much attached to the white man's manner of living, and received from the government a thousand dollars a year annuity. From first to last, Ouray had been friendly to the whites, and always an advocate of peace. The moment he heard of the attack on Thornburgh's command, he sent runners to the spot and ordered the Indians to cease at once; so powerful was he that hostilities ended immediately.

The Pi-Utes have a rather poetical conceit in accounting for the movements of the celestial bodies. Their theory is that the sun rules the heavens. He is a big chief; the moon is his squaw, and the stars are his children. The sun devours his children whenever he is able to catch them. They are constantly afraid of him as he is passing through the sky. He gets up very early in the morning; his children, the stars, fly out of sight, and go away into the blue; and they are not seen again until he goes to bed, which is deep down under the ground, in a great hole. When he goes to his hole, he creeps and crawls, and sleeps there all night. The hole is so little that he cannot turn around in it, so he is obliged, when he has had all the sleep he requires, to pass on through, and in the morning he is seen in the east again. When he comes out of his hole, he begins to hunt through the sky to catch and eat any of the stars he can find. All of the sun is not seen; his shape is like a snake or lizard. It is not his head that is seen, but his stomach, which is stuffed with stars he has devoured. His wife, the moon, goes into the same hole as her husband, to sleep also. She has great fear of him, and when he comes into the hole to sleep, she does not remain there long, if he be cross.

The moon has great love for her children, the stars, and is ever happy to be travelling up where they are. Her children feel perfectly safe, and smile as she passes along. But she cannot help one of them being devoured every month. It is ordered by Pah-ah, the Great Spirit, who dwells above all, that the sun must swallow one of his children each month. Then the mother-moon feels very sorry, and she must mourn. She paints her face black, for her child is gone. But the dark will soon wear away from her face a little by little, night after night, and after a time her face becomes all bright again. Soon the sun swallows another child, and the moon puts on her black paint again.

They account for the appearance of a comet by stating that the sun often snaps at one of the stars, his children, and does not get a good hold of it, he only tears a piece out; and the star, getting wild with pain, goes flying across the sky with a great spout of blood flowing from it. It is then very much afraid, and as it flies it always keeps its head turned to watch the sun, its father, and never turns its face away from him until it is far out of his reach.

A few years ago, the Utes sold their lands to the United States government, and the various bands were removed to a reservation.

Among the many legends of the Utes, that accounting for the origin of the hot springs at the mouth of the cañon of the Rio las Gallinas (near Las Vegas, N.M.) is one of the most remarkable. It was related to one of the authors of this volume thirty-two years ago, by an aged warrior, while the party of Indians and white men who had been hunting for black-tail deer in the mountains were sitting around their camp-fire at night.

The wrinkled and paint-bedaubed savage veteran filled his pipe, lighted it, then taking a whiff after saluting the sky, the earth, and the cardinal points of the compass, passed it around, Indian-fashion, and began his weird story; which is here given, divested of the poor English of our interpreter: —

"Thousands of snows have passed, thousands of Indian summers made their delightful round, since the Medicine Waters were formed there by the Great Spirit to prove that the people of the powerful Ute Nation were his special care. Warriors, too, who were wounded in battle with their hereditary enemies, the Pawnees of the plains, — if they were brave and had pleased the Great Spirit, — had only to repair to the hot waters flowing out of the mountain side, bathe three times a day in their healing flood, and drink of the coldest that sprang from the same rocky ledge. Then, in the course of a few suns, no matter how badly injured, they would certainly recover and become stronger than ever. If, however, any who had behaved cowardly in the heat of action, — which to the Great Spirit is a great abomination, never condoned, — and went to the Big Medicine to heal his wounds, the water had no effect and he soon died. So these Medicine Waters were not only a panacea for all diseases, and injuries received in honourable warfare, but an infallible test of the courage of every wounded warrior engaged in frequent sanguinary conflicts."

That the action of Las Vegas Hot Springs was believed to be a direct manifestation of the power of the

Great Spirit, the legend further confirms, for after his preliminary observations of their efficacy and purpose, the old warrior continued: "The Utes were the first people created. They had thousands of ponies. The mountains were filled with deer, bear, bighorn, and elk, while the plains below were black with herds of buffalo. They were very wealthy. Many hundreds of years they remained the happiest race on earth, always victorious in battle, and never suffering for food. Their head chief at this time was We-lo-lon-ñan-nai (the forked lightning), the bravest warrior of all the tribes. His people loved him for his good qualities, and the justice with which he administered the affairs of the nation. One morning he was taken suddenly ill, and called into his lodge the celebrated medicine-men of his band to prescribe for him; but these famous doctors, after exhausting all their art and cunning, were obliged to declare there was no hope for their chief; he would soon be gathered to his fathers unless the Great Spirit, in his love for his chosen people, would interfere. To enlist his offices in behalf of their cherished dying leader, the oldest medicine-man, by virtue of seniority, ordered a sacrifice to be made as an offering of adoration and suppliance.

"A large altar of pine logs was erected near the lodge of We-lo-lon-nan-nai, and a buffalo bull, freshly captured for the purpose, driven to the spot, killed, and his hide taken off. The entire carcass was lifted with much ritualistic observance upon the altar, and then the whole tribe, in obedience to the order of the head medicine-man, prostrated themselves on the ground. Touching a torch to the pile, and wrapping himself in the bloody skin of the animal, the medicine-man took a position about a hundred yards from the altar in an attitude of supplication, to commune with the Great Spirit.

"Absolute silence reigned; not a sound broke the awful solemnity of the occasion, excepting the crackling of the fragrant pine limbs used as fuel, and the seething of the flesh as it melted under the heat.

"When the altar and all its appliances had been burnt to ashes, the medicine-man gave the signal for the people to rise, and then announced the communication he had received from the Great Spirit.

"'We-lo-lon-nan-nai will not die; he shall live long enough to rule over the Ute Nation; but he is very sick. He must be carried to a spot which will be designated by the Great Spirit, where he will cause a Big Medicine to appear out of the ground. It will not only cure the chief of the Utes this time, but it is for the sick and wounded of the nations for all time to come. To-morrow, at sunrise, We-lo-lon-nan-nai must be escorted by a hundred warriors to where the Big Medicine is to appear, guided by the flight of an arrow to be shot from the bow of the youngest medicine-man in the tribe as often as the end of its flight is reached. Day after day shall he shoot, until the arrow stands up in the earth, where is the place the Big Medicine is to be found, when We-lo-lon-nan-nai smokes the red-stone peace-pipe of the tribe.'

"Arriving at the great cañon, where the arrow stood upright in the earth, and where only a cold stream of water flowed through its bottom, We-lo-lon-nan-nai sat himself down under the rocky ledge at the entrance to the mighty gap in the range, and, lighting his pipe, directed the smoke of the fragrant kin-nik-i-nik toward the heavens. Suddenly there was a terrible convulsion of the earth, and immediately there burst forth fountains of hot water and mud mounds, where before there was not the sign of a spring.

"Astonished at this manifestation, We-lo-lon-nan-nai offered up a silent prayer, and, divesting himself of his robe, told his followers to bury him in the hot mud up to his head. They complied with his orders, and he remained in the excavation, which was made large enough to receive his entire body, for a whole day; and when taken out at night all his pains were gone, and he seemed to his warriors to have recovered his youth. Many of them who were suffering with different ailments then tried the efficacy of the hot water and the mud, and were from that instant cured.

"The report of the miraculous healing of the Ute chief soon spread among the neighbouring tribes, and the sick from everywhere came flocking to the Big Medicine Springs, which they continued to use until the white man took possession of the country, and the Indians have ever since been lessening gradually in number, until there are now but few left, because deprived of their Big Medicine.

"We-lo-lon-nan-nai ruled over the Utes for many years after his restoration to health; in fact, never died, but was carried on the wings of an immense bird, which was supposed by the wandering warriors to be a messenger of the Great Spirit, right to the abode of the blessed. His name is revered to this day, and the young men are encouraged to emulate his virtues, the story of which has come down through untold æons."[1]

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[1] There is more in this legend of a primitive, superstitious people, from an ethnological view of its details, than would be suspected at first. The story of the sacrifice and the medicine-man wrapping himself in the bloody hide of the buffalo, the use of the pine as fuel, and the prostration of the multitude, while communion is held with the Great Spirit, is the same ceremony that was observed by the Druids, and religious peoples before them. This peculiar offering of blood was common to the Indian who in the early years of the century occupied a portion of the territory east of the Mississippi. It will be remembered by the student of American history that when the war of 1812–1815 was pending, the celebrated Tecumseh and his brother, the Shawnee Prophet, called the tribes together, in order to induce them to side with the English. At that famous council they sacrificed a spotless red heifer on a high altar, and the medicine-man

To the uninitiated reader, it may, perhaps, be interesting to know the meaning of the somewhat strange Indian cognomens.

The majority of savages receive their names from some peculiarity of person, costume, or from bodily deformity. Ba-oo-kish, or Closed Hand, a noted Crow chief, was thus named from the fact that when young his hand was so badly burned as to cause his fingers to close within the palm, and grow fast. White Forehead, because he always wore a white band around his head to conceal the scar of a wound which had been inflicted by a squaw. Mock-pe-lu-tah, Red Cloud or Bloody Hand, one of the most terrible warriors of the Sioux Nation, derived his name from his deeds of blood, and the red blankets which his braves invariably wore. They "never moved on their enemies without appearing as a cloud, so great were their numbers. Sweeping down with his hosts on the border, he covered the hills like a red cloud in the heavens, and never returned to his village until he had almost exterminated the tribe or settlement against which his wrath was directed." Ta-shunk-ah-ko-ke-pah-pe, Man afraid of his Horses, obtained his name from having captured a great

wrapped the bloody skin around him, while all the savages present prostrated themselves and communed with the Great Spirit to know what to do. The result was that Tecumseh's plans were defeated, for the Indians were told by the Great Spirit to side with the Americans.

In the eleventh Book of the *Æneid*, Virgil relates the same observance on Mount Soracte, where there was a temple dedicated to Apollo, and a sacrifice made annually to the god, who represented the sun. Arruns in his prayer says:—

"Apollo, thou of gods
The mightiest, who in guard the sacred mount
Soracte holdest, and whom first of all
We worship, unto whom are heaped the fires
The piney branches make, and whom adore
Thy votaries, as we walk, by pious zeal
Sustained, on burning coals."

many horses at one time, which he was constantly afraid he would lose. Once, when the Shoshones attacked his camp, he left his family in the hands of the enemy, to run off his horses. No Knife, a noted man of the Omahas, was named from an incident that occurred at the time of his birth. He was born on the march, and was ever after known by his singular appellation. Ta-ton-ka-ig-oton-ka, Sitting Bull, the most vindictive and determined enemy the whites ever had, was so named because once, after having shot a buffalo, he leaped from his horse astride of the animal to skin it, when with the Indian upon him the wounded bull sat up on his haunches. The celebrated Sioux chief, Sin-ta-gal-las-ca, Spotted Tail, when young always wore a coon tail in his hair, hence his name. Connected with the history of this famous warrior, there is a pathetic episode, which shows the better side of Indian character.

Spotted Tail had a daughter, who was very beautiful according to the savage idea. She fell in love with an army officer stationed at Fort Laramie. He did not reciprocate her passion, and plainly told the dusky maiden he could never marry her. The poor girl visited the fort every day, and would sit for hours on the porch on her beloved's quarters until he came out, and then she would quietly follow him about with the fidelity of a dog. She seemed to ask no greater pleasure than to look at him, be near him, and was ever miserable when out of his sight.

Spotted Tail, who was cognizant of his daughter's affection for the young army officer, remonstrated with her in vain, and when he found he could not conquer her foolish passion, sent her away to a remote band of his tribe. She obediently went without murmuring, but, arrived at her destination, she refused food, and actually pined away until she became a mere skeleton. Spotted Tail was sent for, to see her die. He hastened to her bed of robes and found her almost gone. With the little strength she had left, she told her father of her great love for the whites, and made him promise that he would ever after her death live at peace with them. Then she appeared to be very happy, and closing her eyes said, "This is my last request, bury me at Fort Laramie," then died. The old chief carried her body to the fort, and interred it with the whites, where she wished to live.

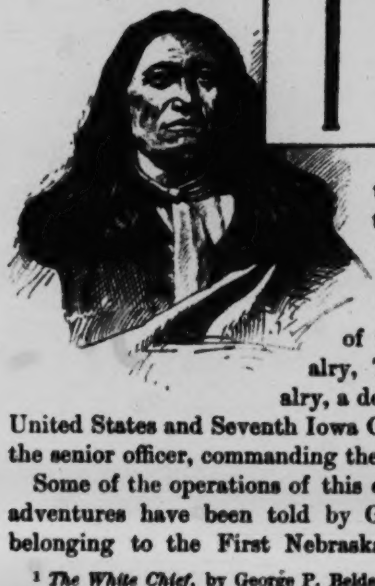
The grave of the unfortunate maiden had been carefully marked, and as long as the fort was garrisoned it continued to be an object of great interest.

Spotted Tail, after the death of his daughter, never spoke in council with the whites without referring to her request, and declared it to be his wish to live at peace with the people she loved so well.

O'Fallon's Bluffs
from near the forks of the Platte

CHAPTER XV

SIOUX WAR OF 1863 — SPOTTED TAIL — GEORGE P. BELDEN'S ACCOUNT — SERGEANTS HILES AND ROLLA — BELDEN AND NELSON HAVE AN ADVENTURE — BELDEN MAPS THE COUNTRY — GUARDING BEN HOLLIDAY'S COACHES — AN INVOLUNTARY HIGHWAYMAN — CAPTURING SIOUX AT GILMAN'S RANCH — MORROW'S RANCH — BENTZ AND WISE — ATTACK ON THE AMBULANCE — PEACE COMMISSION — MASSACRE OF COLONEL FETTERMAN'S COMMAND AT FORT PHIL KEARNY



Spotted Tail

IN 1863, the Indians of the Valley under the leadership of the celebrated Sioux war-chief, Spotted Tail, broke out, and the government determined to chastise them. An expedition was organized, which was to rendezvous at North Platte, consisting of the First Nebraska Cavalry, Twelfth Missouri Cavalry, a detachment of the Second United States and Seventh Iowa Cavalry, Colonel Brown, the senior officer, commanding the whole.

Some of the operations of this expedition and personal adventures have been told by George P. Belden, then belonging to the First Nebraska Cavalry.[1] He was a famous trapper, scout, and guide, and was known as "The White Chief." He afterward became an officer in the regular army. His account runs as follows: —

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[1] *The White Chief*, by George P. Belden. Edited by General James S. Brisbin. Published by C. F. Vent; Cincinnati, 1872.

"The snow was quite deep on the plains, and knowing that the hostile Indians, who were then encamped on the Republican River, were encumbered by their villages, women, and children, it was thought to be a favourable time to strike them a severe blow. There were many Indians in our command, among others a large body of Pawnee scouts. Early in January the expedition left the Platte River, and marched southward toward the Republican. When we reached the river a depot of supplies was established and named Camp Wheaton, after the general then commanding the Department of the Platte. This done, the scouting began, and we were ready for war. Nor were we long kept waiting, for Lieutenant James Murie, who marched out to Short Nose Creek with a party of scouts, was suddenly attacked by a large body of Sioux, and six of his men wounded. Colonel Brown considered this an unfortunate affair, inasmuch as the Indians, having learned by it the presence of troops in their country, would be on the alert, and, in all probability, at once clear out with their villages. He determined, if it were possible, still to surprise them, and ordered the command immediately into the saddle. We pushed hard for Solomon's Fork, a great resort for the savages, but arrived only in time to find their camps deserted and the Indians all gone.

"One evening, as we were encamped on the banks of the Solomon, a huge buffalo bull suddenly appeared on the bluff overlooking the camp, and gazed in wonder at a sight so unusual to his eyes. In a moment a dozen guns were ready to fire, but as the beast came down the narrow ravine washed by the rains in the bluff, all waited until he should emerge on the open plain near the river. Then a lively skirmish was opened on him, and he turned and quickly disappeared again in the brush. Several of the soldiers ran up one of the narrow water-courses, hoping to get a shot at him as he emerged on the open prairie. What was their surprise to meet him coming down. He ran up one ravine, and being half crazed by his wounds, had, on reaching the prairie, turned into the one in which the soldiers were. As soon as he saw him, the soldier in front called out to those behind him to run, but they, not understanding the nature of the danger, continued to block up the passage. The bull could barely force his great body between the high and narrow banks; but before all the soldiers could get out of the ravine he was upon them, and trampled two of them under his feet, not hurting them much, but frightening them terribly. As the beast came out again on the open bank of the river a score of soldiers, who had run over from their camp with their guns, gave him a dozen balls. Still he did not fall, but, dashing through the brush, entered the cavalry camp, and running up to a large gray horse that was tied to a tree, lifted the poor brute on his horns and threw him into the air. The horse was completely disembowelled, and dropped down dead. The buffalo next plunged his horns into a fine bay horse, the property of an officer in the Seventh Iowa Cavalry, and the poor fellow groaned with pain until the hills resounded. Exhausted by his exertions and wounds, the bull laid down carefully by the side of the horse, as if afraid of hurting himself, and in a moment rolled over dead. We skinned and dressed him, and carried the meat into camp for our suppers; but it was dearly bought beef, at the expense of the lives of two noble horses; and Colonel Brown notified us he wished no further contracts closed on such expensive terms.

"While we lay encamped at the depot of supplies, on the Republican, Colonel Brown called for volunteer scouts, stating that he would give a purse of five hundred dollars to any one who would discover a village of Indians and lead the command to the spot. This glittering prize dazzled the eyes of many a soldier, but few had the courage to undertake so hazardous an enterprise. Sergeant Hiles, of the First Nebraska, and Sergeant Rolla, of the Seventh Iowa, came forward and said they would go upon the expedition provided they could go alone. Both were shrewd, sharp men, and Colonel Brown readily gave his consent, well knowing that in scouting, where the object is not to fight, but to gain information and keep concealed, the fewer men in the party the better their chances of escape.

"On the day after Hiles and Rolla had left camp, Nelson, who had come down and joined the army as a guide, proposed to me that we should go out and hunt an adventure. My old love of Indian life was upon me, and I joyfully accepted his proposition. I applied to Colonel Brown for permission to set out at once, but he declined to grant my request, on the ground that it was not necessary or proper for an officer to engage in such an enterprise. I, however, coaxed the colonel a little, and he finally told me I might go.

"Packing several days' supplies on a mule, as soon as it was dark Nelson and I started, he leading the mule, and I driving him from behind. We travelled over to the Little Beaver, then up the stream for some distance, when we crossed over and camped on Little Beaver. Here we expected to find Indian signs, but were disappointed. We rested for a short time, and then travelled down the Beaver until opposite Short Nose Creek, when we crossed the divide and camped on that stream. Two days later we pushed on to Cedar Creek, and then crossed over to Prairie Dog Creek. We had travelled only at night, hiding away all day in the brush that lined the creeks, and keeping a sharp lookout for Indians. So far, we had seen no Indian signs, and began to despair of finding any, when one morning, just as we were preparing for breakfast, I heard several shots fired, apparently four or five miles up the creek. Nelson ran out on the bluff, and, applying his ear to the ground, said he could distinctly hear the reports of many rifles. We could not imagine what this meant, and withdrew into the bluffs 'to make it out,' as the old trappers say.

"Nelson was the first speaker, and he gave it as his opinion that Colonel Brown, who had told us before leaving camp he would soon start for the Solomon, had set out earlier than he expected, and was now crossing above us. I set my compass, and, finding we were nearly on the line where Brown would cross, readily fell in with Nelson's reasoning. So sure was I that the guns we had heard were Colonel Brown's soldiers out hunting that I proposed we should saddle up and go to them. This move came near proving fatal to us, as will presently appear. We rode boldly up the stream, in broad daylight, some five miles, when, not finding any trail, I began to express my surprise at the long distance we had heard the reports of the guns, but Nelson told me it was no uncommon thing, when snow was on the ground, to hear a rifle-shot ten to twenty miles along a creek bottom, and, incredible as this may seem, I found out afterward it was nevertheless true.

"We rode on about five miles farther, when suddenly Nelson halted, and, pointing to an object a long distance ahead, said he believed it was a horseman. We lost no time in getting into the bluffs, where we could observe what went on without being seen, and soon saw an animal coming down the creek bottom. As it drew near, we discovered it to be a horse, evidently much frightened, and flying from pursuers. The horse galloped past, but stopped half a mile below us and quietly went to grazing, every now and then raising his head and looking up the creek, as if he expected to see some enemy following him. We lay for several hours momentarily expecting to see a body of Indians coming down the creek, but none came, and at noon Nelson said I should watch, and he would crawl down the creek and see if he could discover anything from the horse. I saw Nelson approach quite near the animal, and heard him calling it, when, to my surprise, it came up to him and followed him into the bluffs. The horse was the one Sergeant Hiles had ridden from the camp a few days previous, and was well known to Nelson and me as a superb animal, named Selim.

"It did not take us long to come to the conclusion that Hiles and Rolla had been attacked, and that the firing we had heard in the morning was done by the Indians. From the fact that Hiles' horse had no saddle on when found, we concluded he had been in the hands of the Indians, and had probably broken away from them, and we doubted not that at least Hiles was dead.

"Fearing the savages would come down upon us next, we lost no time in getting down the creek. We soon passed where we had encamped the night before, and, finding the fire still burning, put it out, and, covering up the ashes, pushed on for several miles and camped among the bluffs. Nelson carried up several logs from the creek, with which to make a barricade in case of attack, and, Nelson taking first watch, I lay down to sleep, without fire or supper, except a piece of raw pork.

"At nine o'clock I arose to watch, and soon after midnight, the moon coming up bright and clear, I awoke Nelson, and suggested to him we should saddle up and cross over to Cedar Creek, for I had a strong presentiment that some misfortune would befall us if we remained longer where we were. It is not a little singular, but true, that man has a wonderful instinct, and can nearly always divine coming trouble or danger. This instinct in the frontiersman, of course, is wonderfully developed by the perilous life he leads; but, call it presentiment or what you will, this instinct exists in every beast of the field, as well as in the human breast, and he who follows it can have no safer guide. Several times have I saved my life by obeying the dictates of that silent monitor within, which told me to go, and yet gave me no reason for my going.

"We had not ridden far when we came upon a heavy Indian trail, and found it not more than four or five hours old. The tracks showed some fifty ponies, and all going in the direction of the Republican. We were now convinced that Rolla had escaped and the Indians were pursuing him. Following on the trail for some distance, until we came to a bare spot on the bluff where our horses would leave no tracks in the snow, we turned to the left, and, whipping up the ponies, struck out for a forced march. We knew the Indians might return at any moment, and if they should find our trail they would follow us like blood-hounds.

"All night long we pushed on, halting only at sunrise to eat a bite and give our poor ponies a few mouthfuls of grass. Again we were off, and throughout the day whipped and spurred along our animals as rapidly as possible. At night we halted for two hours to rest, and then mounted the saddle once more. On the fifth day we met a company of cavalry that had been sent out by Colonel Brown to look for us, and with them we returned to camp.

"We learned from the cavalrymen that Sergeant Hiles had been attacked by the Indians, and Sergeant Rolla had been killed. Hiles, though he had lost his horse, had managed to work his way back to camp on foot, where he had arrived the morning they left camp, nearly starved. We had gone much out of our way to escape the Indians who had followed Hiles; but since we had avoided them and succeeded in saving our scalps, we did not care a fig for our long and toilsome journey.

"Sergeant Hiles related to me his adventures after leaving camp, and I will here repeat them as a sequel to my own. He said: 'Rolla and I travelled several days, and finally pulled up on Prairie Dog Creek. We had seen no Indians, and were becoming careless, believing there were none in the country. One morning just about daybreak I built a fire, and while Rolla and I were warming ourselves we were fired upon by some forty Indians. Rolla fell, pierced through the heart, and died instantly. How I escaped I know not, for the balls whistled all around me, knocking up the fire, and even piercing my clothing, yet I was not so much as scratched.

"'I ran to my horse, which was saddled and tied near by, and flinging myself on his back, dashed across the prairies. The Indians followed, whooping and yelling like devils, and although their ponies ran well, they could not overtake my swift-footed Selim. I had got well ahead of them, and was congratulating myself on my escape from a terrible death, when suddenly Selim fell headlong into a ravine that was filled with drifted snow. It was in vain I tried to extricate him; the more he struggled the deeper he sank. Knowing the Indians would be up in a few minutes, I cut the saddle-girths with my knife, that the horse might be freer in his movements, and then, bidding him lie still, I took my pistols and burrowed into the snow beside him. After I had dug down a little way, I struck off in the drift, and worked myself along it toward the valley. I had not tunnelled far before I heard the Indians coming, and, pushing up my head, I cut a small hole in the crust of the snow, so I could peep out. As the savages came up they began to yell, and Selim, making a great bound, leaped upon the solid earth at the edge of the ravine, and, dragging himself out of the drift, galloped furiously across the prairies. Oh! how I wished then I was on his back, for I knew the noble fellow would soon bear me out of reach of all danger.

"'The Indians divided, part of them going up the ravine and crossing over to pursue Selim, while the rest dismounted to look for his rider. They carefully examined the ground all around to find my trail, but not finding any, they returned and searched up and down the ravine for me. Two or three times they punched in the snow near me, and once an Indian passed within a few feet of the hole. Great drops of perspiration stood on my forehead, and every moment I expected to be discovered, dragged out, and scalped, but I remained perfectly still, grasping my pistols, and determined to make it cost the redskins at least three of their number.

"'After a while the Indians got tired searching for me, and drew off to consult. I saw the party that had gone in pursuit of Selim rejoin their companions, and I was not a little gratified to observe that they did not bring back my gallant steed with them, from which I knew he had made his escape.

"'The Indians mounted and rode down the ravine, examining every inch of ground for my trail. As I saw them move off, hope once more revived in my breast; but in an hour they came back and again searched the drift. At last, however, they went off without finding me, and I lay down to rest, so exhausted was I, from watching and excitement, that I could not stand. I knew I did not dare to sleep, for it was very cold, and a stupor would come upon me. All that day and night, and the next day, I lay in the drift, for I knew the Indians were watching it.

"'On the second night, as soon as it was dark, I crawled out, and worked my way to the foot of the ravine. At first I was so stiff and numb I could hardly move hand or foot, but as I crawled along, the blood began to warm up, and soon I was able to walk. I crept cautiously along the bluffs until I had cleared the ravine, and then, striking out on the open prairie, steered to the northward. Fortunately, the first day out I shot an antelope and got some raw meat, which kept me from starving. In two days and a half I reached the camp, nearly dead from fatigue and hunger, and was thoroughly glad to be at home in my tent once more, with a whole scalp on my head.'

"We had not found an Indian village, and none of us got the five hundred dollars, but we all had a glorious adventure, and that to a frontiersman is better than money.

"While we lay in camp on Medicine Creek, Colonel Brown sent for me, and ordered me to look up and map the country. I was detached as a topographical engineer, and this order relieved me from all company duty, and enabled me to go wherever I pleased, which was not a little gratifying to one so fond of rambling about.

"Packing my traps on my pony one day, I set out down the Medicine ahead of the command, intending to hunt wild turkeys until near night, and then rejoin the command before it went into camp. The creek bottom was alive with turkeys, the cold weather having driven them to take shelter among the bushes that lined the creek. I had not gone far when a dense fog arose, shutting out all objects, even at the distance of a few feet. It was a bad day for hunting, but presently as I rode along I heard a turkey gobble close by, and, dismounting, I crept among the bushes and peered into the fog as well as I could. I saw several dark objects, and drawing up my double-barrelled shot-gun fired at them. Hardly had the noise of the explosion died away, when I heard a great flopping in the bushes, and on going up to it found a large turkey making his last kicks. I picked him up and was about to turn away, when I saw another fine old gobbler desperately wounded, but trying to crawl off. I ran after him, but he hopped along so fast I was obliged to give him the contents of my other barrel to keep him from getting away into the thick brush.

"I had now two fine turkeys, and, as the day was bad, determined to go no further, but ascend the bluffs and wait for the command. I went out on the prairie, and made a diligent search for the old trail, but, as it was covered with some seven inches of snow, I could not find it. Knowing the command would pass near the creek, I went back to hunt, thinking I would go up after it had passed, strike the trail, and follow it into camp.

"I had not gone far down the creek when I ran into a fine elk, and knocked him over with my Henry rifle. I cut off the choice pieces, and, packing them on my pony, once more set out to find the trail. I knew the command had not passed, and ascended the highest point on the bluff, straining my eyes to see if I could not discover it moving. I waited several hours, but not finding it, I concluded it had not marched by the old trail, but struck straight across the country. I now moved up the creek, determined to keep along its bank until I came to the old camp, and then follow the trail. I had not gone far when I came upon two Indians who belonged to my company, and who were also looking for the command.

"Night was coming on, the wind rising, and the air growing bitter cold, so I said to the Indians we would go down the creek where there was plenty of dry wood, and make a night camp. They readily assented, and we set out, arriving at a fine grove just before dark.

"While one of the Indians gathered wood, the other one and I cleared away the snow to make a place for our camp. The snow in the bottom was nearly three feet deep, and when we had bared the ground a high wall was piled up all around us. The wood was soon brought, and a bright fire blazing. After warming ourselves, we opened a passage through the snow for a short distance, and clearing another spot led our horses into this most perishable of stables. Our next care was to get them some cottonwood limbs to eat, and then we gathered small dry limbs and made a bedstead of them on which to spread our blankets. Piling in some wood until the fire roared and cracked, we sat down in the heat of the blaze, feeling quite comfortable, except that we were desperately hungry. Some coals were raked out, and the neck of the elk cut off and spitted on a stick to roast. When it was done we divided it, and sprinkling it with a little pepper and salt from our haversacks had as savoury and wholesome a repast as any epicure might desire. After supper, hearing the coyotes howling in the woods below, I had the Indians bring in my saddle, to which was strapped the elk meat, and, cutting the limb off a tree close by the fire, we lifted the saddle astride the stump so high up that the wolves could not reach it. All being now in readiness for the night, we filled our pipes and sat down to smoke and talk.

"At nine o'clock the Indians replenished the fire, and, feeling sleepy, I wrapped myself in my blankets and lay down to rest. I soon fell asleep, and slept well until nearly midnight, when I was awakened by the snapping and snarling of the wolves near the fire. The wood had burned down to a bed of coals, and gave but a faint light, but I could see a dozen pair of red eyes glaring at me over the edge of the snowbank. The Indians were sound asleep, and, knowing they were very tired, I did not wake them, but got my gun, and, wrapping myself in my blankets, sat up by the fire to watch the varmints and warm my feet. Presently I heard a long wild howl down in the woods, and knew by the 'whirr-ree, whirr-ree' in it that it proceeded from the throat of the dreaded buffalo wolf, or Kosh-e-nee, of the prairies. There was another howl, then another, and another, and, finally, a loud chorus of a dozen. Instantly silence fell among the coyotes, and they began to scatter. For a time all was quiet, and I had begun to doze, when suddenly the coals flew all over me, and I opened my eyes just in time to see a great gray wolf spring out of the fire and bound up the snowbank. I leaped to my feet and peered into the darkness, where I could see scores of dark shadows moving about, and a black cluster gathered under my saddle. I called the Indians, who quietly and nimbly jumped to their feet, and came forward armed with their revolvers. I told them what had happened, and that we were surrounded by a large pack of gray wolves. We had no fear for ourselves, but felt uneasy lest they might attack our horses, who were pawing and snorting with alarm. I spoke to them kindly, and they immediately became quiet. At the suggestion of the Indians I brought forward my revolvers, and we all sat down to watch the varmints, and see what they would do.

"In a few minutes, a pair of fiery, red eyes looked down at us from the snowbank; then another, and another pair, until there were a dozen. We sat perfectly still, and presently one great gray wolf gathered himself, and made a leap for the elk-meat on the saddle. He nearly touched it with his nose, but failed to secure the coveted prize, and fell headlong into the fire. We fired two shots into him, and he lay still until one of the Indians pulled him out to keep his hair from burning and making a disagreeable smell. In about five minutes, another wolf leaped at our elk-meat and fell in the fire. We despatched him as we had done the first one, and then threw him across the dead body of his brother. So we kept on firing until we had killed eight wolves; then, tired of killing the brutes with pistols, I brought out my double-barrelled shot-gun, and loading each barrel with nine buckshot, waited until they were gathered thick under the tree on which hung my meat, and then let them have it. Every discharge caused some to tumble down, and sent the rest scampering and howling to the rear. Presently they became more wary, and I had to fire on them at long range.

"The Indians now went out and gathered some dry limbs, and we kindled up a bright fire. Then we threw the carcasses of the nine dead wolves, that were in our camp, over the snowbank, and knowing that the beasts would not come near our bright fire, two of us lay down to sleep, while the third remained up to watch and keep the fire burning.

"The coyotes now returned, and with unearthly yells attacked their dead brothers, snapping, snarling, and quarrelling over their carcasses as they tore the flesh and crunched the bones.

"We rose at daylight, and through the dim light could see the coyotes trotting off to the swamp, while near the camp lay heads, legs, and piles of cleanly licked bones, all that was left of the gray wolves we had killed.

"After breakfast we set out to find the command, striking across the country, expecting to come upon their trail. We travelled all day, however, and saw no trail. At night we camped out again, and were scarcely in camp, when we again heard the wolves howling around us. They had followed us all day, no doubt expecting another repast, such as had been served to them the night before. We, however, kept a bright fire burning, and no gray wolves came about; so the coyotes were disappointed, and vented their disappointment all night long in the most dismal howls I ever heard. At times, it seemed as though there were five hundred of them, and joining their voices in chorus they would send up a volume of sound that resembled the roar of a tempest, or the discordant singing of a vast multitude of people.

"While we cooked breakfast, a strong picket of wolves watched all around the camp, feasting their greedy eyes from a distance on my elk-meat. When we started from camp, a hundred or more of them followed us, often coming quite close to the back pony, and biting and quarrelling about the elk that was never to be their meat. When we halted, they would halt, and sitting down, loll out their tongues and lick the snow. At length, I took my shot-gun, and loading the barrels, fired into the thickest of the pack. Two or three were wounded, and no sooner did their companions discover that they were bleeding and disabled, than they fell upon them, tore them to pieces, and devoured every morsel of their flesh. I had seen men who would do the same thing with their fellows, but until I witnessed the contrary with my own eyes, I had supposed this practice was confined to the superior brute creation.

"The third day out, finding no trace of the command, we concluded to go back to the Medicine and seek the old camp, from which we could take the trail and follow it up until we came upon it. We reached the Medicine at sundown, and there, to our satisfaction, found the troops still in camp, where we had left them. They had not marched in consequence of the cold and foggy weather.

"I was soon in my own tent and sound asleep, being thoroughly worn out with the exposure and fatigue of my long journey.

"I was sent down from Camp Cottonwood (now Fort

McPherson), with thirty men, to Gilman's Ranch, fifteen miles east of Cottonwood on the Platte, where I was to remain, guard the ranch, and furnish guards to Ben Holliday's overland stage-coaches. In those days, Gilman's was an important place, and in earlier times had been a great trading point for the Sioux. Two or three trails led from the Republican to this place and every winter the Sioux had come in with their ponies loaded down with buffalo, beaver, elk, and deer skins, which they exchanged with the traders at Gilman's. War had, however, put a stop to these peaceful pursuits; still the Sioux could not give up the habit of travelling these favourite trails. The ponies often came in from the Republican, not now laden with furs and robes, but each bearing a Sioux warrior. The overland coaches offered a great temptation to the cupidity of the Sioux, and they were not slow to avail themselves of any opportunity to attack them. The coaches carried the mails and much treasure, and if the savages could now and then succeed in capturing one, they got money, jewels, scalps, horses, and not infrequently white women, as a reward for their enterprise.

"Troops were stationed in small squads at every station, about ten miles apart, and they rode from station to station on the top of all coaches, holding their guns ever ready for action. It was not pleasant, this sitting perched up on top of a coach, riding through dark ravines and tall grass, in which savages were ever lurking. Generally the first fire from the Indians killed one or two horses, and tumbled a soldier or two off the top of the coach. This setting one's self as a sort of a target was a disagreeable and dangerous duty, but the soldiers performed it without murmuring. My squad had to ride up to Cottonwood, and down to the station below, where they waited for the next coach going the other way, and returned by it to their post at Gilman's. All the other stations were guarded in like manner; so it happened that every coach carried some soldiers.

"One evening my pony was missing, and thinking he had strayed off but a short distance, I buckled on my revolvers and went out to look for him. I had not intended to go far, but not finding him, I walked on, and on, until I found myself some four miles from the ranch. Alarmed at my indiscretion, for I knew the country was full of Indians, I hastily set out to return, and as it was now growing dark, I determined to go up a ravine that led to the post by a nearer route than the trail. I had got nearly to the end of the ravine, where the stage-road crossed it, and was about to turn into the road when, on looking up the bank, I saw on the crest of the slope some dark objects. At first I thought they were ponies, for they were moving on all fours, and directly toward the road. I ran up the bank, and had not gone more than ten yards, when I heard voices, and looking around, saw within a dozen steps of me five or six Indians lying on the grass, and talking in low tones. They had noticed me, but evidently thought I was one of their own number. Divining the situation in a moment, I walked carelessly on until near the crest of the hill, where I suddenly came upon a dozen more Indians, crawling along on their hands and knees. One of them gruffly ordered me down, and I am sure I lost no time in dropping into the grass. Crawling carefully along, for I knew it would not do to stop, I still managed to keep a good way behind and off to one side. We at last reached the road, and the Indians, gun in hand, took up their position in the long grass close by the roadside. I knew the up-coach would be due at the station in half an hour, and I was now myself in the unpleasant position of waylaying one of the very coaches I had been sent to guard. Perhaps one of my own soldiers coming up on the coach would kill me, and then what would people say? how would my presence with the Indians be explained? and how would it sound to have the newspapers publish, far and near, that an officer of the United States army had deserted his post, joined the Indians, and attacked a stage-coach? However, there was no help for it, and I lay still waiting for developments. It was now time for the coach, and we watched the road with straining eyes. Two or three times I thought I heard the rumbling of the wheels, and a tremor seized me, but it was only the wind rustling in the tall grass. An hour went by, and still no coach. The Indians became uneasy, and one who seemed to be the leader of the expedition rose up, and, motioning the others to follow him, started off down the hill toward the ravine. I made a motion as if getting up, and seeing the Indians' backs turned, dropped flat on my face and lay perfectly still. Slowly their footsteps faded away, and raising my head I saw them mount their ponies and disappear over the neighbouring hill, as if going down the road to meet the coach.

"As soon as they were out of sight, I sprang up and ran as fast as I could to the ranch when, relating what had happened, I started with some soldiers and citizens down the road to meet the stage. We had not gone far when we heard it coming up, and on reaching it found it had been attacked by Indians a few miles below, one passenger killed and two severely wounded. The coach had but three horses, one having been killed in the fight. The Indians had dashed at the coach mounted, hoping to kill the horses, and thus cut off all means of retreat or flight, but they had only succeeded in killing one horse, when the passengers and soldiers had driven them off, compelling them to carry two of their number with them, dead or desperately wounded.

"I was more careful after that, when I went out hunting ponies, and never tried again to waylay a coach with Indians.

"Among the soldiers stationed at Gilman's Ranch were a number of Omaha and Winnebago Indians, who belonged to my company, in the First Nebraska Cavalry. I had done all I could to teach them the ways of civilization, but despite my instructions, and their utmost endeavours to give up their wild and barbarous practices, every now and then old habits would become too strong upon them to be borne, and they would indulge in the savage customs of their youth. At such times they would throw aside their uniforms, and, wrapping a blanket about them, sing and dance for hours.

"One evening they were in a particularly jolly mood, and having obtained permission to have a dance, went out in front of the building, and for want of a better scalp-pole, assembled around one of the telegraph poles. One fellow pounded lustily on a piece of leather nailed over the mouth of a keg, while the others hopped around in a circle, first upon one leg, then the other, shaking over their heads oyster-cans, that had been filled with pebbles, and keeping time to the rude music, with a sort of guttural song. Now it would be low and slow, and the dancers barely move, then, increasing in volume and rapidity, it would become wild and vociferous, the dancers walking very fast, much as the negroes do in their 'cake-walks.' We had had all manner of dances and songs, and enough drumming and howling to have made any one tired, still the Indians seemed only warming up to their work. The savage frenzy was upon them, and I let them alone until near midnight. Their own songs and dances becoming tiresome, I asked them to give me some Sioux songs, for I had been thinking all the evening of the village up the Missouri, and of my squaws. The Indians immediately struck up a Sioux war song, accompanying it with the war dance.

"All the Indian songs and dances are terminated with a jump, and a sort of wild yell or whoop. When they had danced the Sioux war song, and ended it with the usual whoop, what was our surprise to hear it answered back at no great distance, out upon the prairie. At first I thought it was the echo, but Springer, a half-breed Indian, assured me what I had heard was the cry of other Indians. To satisfy myself, I bade the Indians repeat the song and dance, and this time, sure enough, when it was ended the whoop was answered quite near the ranch. I went inside, lest my uniform should be seen, and telling Springer to continue the dance, I went to a back window and looked out, in the direction from which the sound came.

Belden,
The White Chief

"The moon was just rising, and I could distinctly see three Sioux Indian warriors sitting on their ponies, within a few hundred paces of the house. They seemed to be intently watching what was going on, and were by no means certain as to the character of the performers or performance. At a glance, I made them out to be our deadly enemies, the Ogallalla Sioux, and determined to catch them. I quickly called Springer, and bade him kindle up a small fire, and tell the Indians to strike up the death song and scalp-dance of the Sioux. This, as I expected, at once reassured the strange warriors, and, riding up quite close, they asked Springer, who was not dancing, and who had purposely put himself in their way: —

"'What are you dancing for?'

"'Dancing the scalps of four white soldiers we have killed,' replied Springer.

"'How did you kill them?' inquired the foremost Indian warrior.

"'You see,' said Springer, who, being part Sioux, spoke the language perfectly, 'we were coming down from the Neobarrah,[1] and going over to the Republican to see Spotted Tail and our friends, the Ogallallas, when some soldiers fired on us here, and seeing there were but four of them, we attacked and killed them all. They are now lying dead inside; come, get down and help dance their scalps.'

"Two of the warriors immediately dismounted, giving their ponies to a third one to hold, who remained mounted. Springer seemed to take no notice of this, but leading the warriors up to the dance, joined in with them, the other Indians making room in the circle for the newcomers.

"When the dance was ended, Springer said, 'Come, let us bring out the scalps,' and turning to the two Indians, inquired, 'Will you look at the bodies?' About half the

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[1] Niobrara.

Indians had already gone into the ranch, under pretence of getting the scalps, and the two Sioux walked in with Springer, apparently without suspicion that anything was wrong.

"As soon as they had crossed the threshold the door was closed behind them, and two burly Omahas placed their backs against it. It was entirely dark in the ranch, and Springer proceeded to strike a light. When the blaze of the dry grass flared up it revealed everything in the room, and there stood the two Sioux, surrounded by the Omahas, and a dozen revolvers levelled at their heads.

"Never shall I forget the yell of rage and terror they set up, when they found they were entrapped. The Sioux warrior outside, who was holding the ponies, heard it, and plunging his heels into the sides of his pony, made off as fast as he could. Notwithstanding my men fired a dozen shots at him, he got off safely, and carried away with him all of the three ponies.

"The two Sioux in the ranch were bound hand and foot, and laid in one corner of the room; then my Indians returned to the telegraph pole to finish their dance. Feeling tired, I lay down and fell asleep.

"Next morning I was awakened by most unearthly yells, and looking out, saw my Indians leaping and dancing and yelling around the telegraph pole, where they now had a large fire burning. Presently Springer came in and said the Indians wanted the prisoners. I told him they could not have them, and that in the morning I would send them to Colonel Brown, at McPherson, as was my duty. Springer, who was a non-commissioned officer, communicated this message to the Indians, when the yelling and howling redoubled. In a short time, Springer came in again, and said he could do nothing with the Indians, and that they were determined to have the prisoners, at the same time advising me to give them up.

I again refused, when the Indians rushed into the ranch, and, seizing the prisoners, dragged them out. Seeing they were frenzied I made no resistance, but followed them closely, keeping concealed, however.

"They took the Sioux to an island on the Platte, below the ranch, and there, tying them to a tree, gathered a pile of wood and set it on fire."

Here follows a description of the unspeakable tortures which the unfortunate prisoners suffered, and which are too horrible to be told in these pages.

"The Sioux uttered not a complaint, but endured all their sufferings with that stoicism for which the Indian is so justly celebrated, and which belongs to no other race in the world.

"Sick at heart, I crept back to the ranch and went to bed, leaving the Indians engaged in a furious scalp-dance, and whirling the bloody scalps of the Sioux over their heads, with long poles to which they had them fastened.

"Next morning, when I awoke, I found the Indians wrapped in their blankets, and lying asleep all around me. The excitement of the night had passed off, and brought its corresponding depression. They were very docile and stupid, and it was with some difficulty I could arouse them for the duties of the day. I asked several of them what had become of the Sioux prisoners, but could get no other answer than, 'Guess him must have got away.'

"I was sorely tempted to report the affair to the commanding officer at Fort McPherson, and have the Indians punished, but believing it would do more good in the end to be silent, I said nothing about it. After all, the Omahas and Winnebagoes had treated the Sioux just as the Sioux would have treated them, had they been captured, and so, it being a matter altogether among savages, I let it rest where it belonged.

"I was for a time, in 1865, on duty at Fort Cottonwood, Nebraska, as adjutant of my regiment, the First Nebraska Volunteer Cavalry, when the scarcity of officers at the post made it necessary for the commanding officer to detail me, with thirty Indian soldiers, to proceed to, and garrison Jack Morrow's Ranch, twelve miles west of the fort, on the south side of the Platte River. The Sioux were very hostile then, and it was an ordinary occurrence for ranches to be burned and the owners killed.

"Morrow's Ranch, unlike the little, low, adobe ranches everywhere seen, was a large three-story building, with out-buildings adjacent, and a fine large stable for stock, the whole being surrounded by a commodious stockade of cedar palisades, set deep in the ground, and projecting to the height of about ten or twelve feet above the surface.

"Upon arriving at the ranch, late at night, my usually noisy Indians were quietly sleeping in the huge ox-wagons, which had been provided for transportation. I found the front of the ranch lit up by fires built between the stockade and the buildings on a narrow strip of ground, serving for a front yard. I had been informed by the commanding officer at Cottonwood, that Mr. Morrow was not living at his ranch, but was away East, and the object in sending me there was to prevent the Indians from burning so valuable a property. I was not prepared to find a party encamped at the ranch, and not knowing but that they might be Indians, waiting in so favourable a spot to waylay travellers or emigrants passing the road in front of the stockade, I told my drivers to halt their teams, and, quietly awakening my Indians, I bade them be in readiness to rush up if I should give them a signal by yelling, but to remain in the wagons until I called them, and to make no noise. I then quietly rode forward to reconnoitre, and as the stockade timbers were set very close together, I had to crawl up to the loop-holes cut in the timber to see what was going on inside. Standing on the ground, and holding my pony's nose with my hand to keep him quiet, I stood on my tiptoes, and could see, through one of the loop-holes, a curious sight, but one natural enough on the frontier.

"Grouped around three small fires, built close to the front of the ranch, sat some ten or twelve weather-beaten men, whose hair hung to their shoulders, and each one of whom wore a slouched hat, a pair of revolvers, and a good stout knife, the inseparable companions of a western prairie man. All were intent on eating supper of fried bacon, slapjacks, and coffee.

"They had no guard, doubtless feeling secure in their number and means of defence, against any Indian attack that might be made. 'Hello!' I shouted, 'have you got supper enough for one more?' 'Yes, if you are white or red; but if black, no,' was answered back, with an invitation to 'show' myself. I led the pony across the narrow trench which ran around the stockade, and, mounting him, rode into the yard. As I approached the party I overheard remarks, such as, 'An army cuss'; 'One of those little stuck-up officers.' But not appearing to have heard them, I got down, and asked what party they were. 'Wood-haulers,' they replied; 'taking building logs down the road'; followed by 'Who are you, and where are you going this late at night?' I told them who I was, and that I had now finished my journey, as I intended to stop there. I was immediately informed in a curt manner that they guessed I was rather 'mixed' about staying there, if I had any stock along, for the stables were full, and the ranch, too; and they had no room for any additional people or stock. I told them that I had two teams standing outside, and that it was my intention to put the mules and my pony in the stable; and if there was no room there, I should make room by turning out some of their animals. To this I was plainly told that I could neither turn a mule out nor put an animal in, nor could I remain at the ranch, which they had occupied for their own quarters, Jack Morrow having left and gone East, probably never to return. They said they were a little stronger in numbers than myself and my two drivers, and I must move on or they would make me. I told them that I was a United States officer, acting under orders, and that it would be an easy matter for me to ride back to Cottonwood and get men enough to enforce my orders unless they submitted. Several of the rough-looking fellows said that they each carried good revolvers, and that it was an easy matter to stop me if I attempted to return to Cottonwood, and swore they would do so. I remained quiet for a moment, and the leader of the party looking at me, asked: 'What are you going to do about it?' 'I am going to open the stables and put my animals in that shelter,' I replied, at the same time mounting my pony and riding out to the stables, a short distance in front of which stood my teams. Several of the frontiersmen got up, and, without saying a word, walked to the stables, and went up close to the doors. I ordered the teamsters to drive to the stables, unharness from the heavy ox-wagons, place their teams inside, and if they could not find vacant stalls enough, to untie and turn loose mules to empty the required number for my teams. The teamsters obeyed by driving up, and when they had dismounted and were about to unhitch from the wagons, one of the wood-haulers at the stable door said: 'You can save yourself the trouble, mister, of unhitching them mules, for you ain't a going to put them in this stable; and the first man that attempts it I'll fix.'

"'Suppose I wish to open that door and put up my teams,' said I, 'without any trouble; wouldn't it be better for all concerned?' 'You go to h—l!' he replied; and added, 'You won't get in this stable; that's settled.'

'I'll see about that!' and yelling 'Turn out! Turn out!' in the Indian language, my soldiers jumped from the canvas-covered wagons, yelling like demons, and brandishing their carbines and revolvers in a threatening manner. Never were men so taken back as the wood-haulers. They were sure we were Sioux, and started to run, but I called them back. Not a word was then spoken while my Indians led the mules, that were now unhitched, into the stables.

"Leaving the teamsters to feed and water their animals, I turned my pony over to an Omaha, to unsaddle, and marched my soldiers up to the house, of which I took possession. The roughs changed their tune, and tried to laugh the matter off, saying they knew all the time the wagons were full of soldiers, and they only wanted to see if I had 'nerve.' I told them they could leave their teams in the stables, as my teamsters told me there was room enough yet remaining for all the mules, but that in the morning they must leave. At early light they were off, not, however, before I had found out the names of the leaders of the gang. The doors of the house had been taken off the hinges, and the framed pine used to sleep and chop meat on, all being marked with gashes chopped in them with axes. The windows were also broken, the glass and sashes gone, and the building as much damaged as if Indians had been there for a month. I did all I could to save the property scattered over the grounds, and remained at the ranch some weeks, until an order came for me to go to Omaha as a witness before the United States Court.

"While the troops lay at Camp Cottonwood, now Fort McPherson, the scurvy broke out among the men and caused terrible suffering. There were no anti-scorbutics nearer than Leavenworth, Kansas, which could be had for the troops, and before these could be received, the disease increased to an alarming extent. At last, however, the remedies arrived, and the men began rapidly to convalesce. The doctor advised them to eat wild fruit and berries, and to take plenty of exercise in the open air. There was a plum grove about four miles from the camp, and as this wild fruit was very wholesome, the sick men went out nearly every day to gather it.

"One morning, Captain Mitchell, of the Seventh Iowa Cavalry, procured an ambulance, and, taking with him a driver named Anderson, an orderly named Cramer, and seven hospital patients, started for the plum grove. They arrived at the first grove about ten o'clock, and, finding that most of the plums had been gathered, drove on to another grove some three miles farther up the cañon. They were now about seven miles from camp, too far to be safe, but, as no Indians had been seen lately in the country, they did not feel uneasy. At the upper grove they found two soldiers of the First Nebraska Cavalry, named Bentz and Wise, who had been sent out by the quartermaster to look for stray mules, and they had stopped to gather some plums. As both these men were well armed, Captain Mitchell attached them to his party, and felt perfectly secure.

"Bentz and Wise went up the cañon a little way, and while eating fruit were suddenly fired on from the bushes by almost a dozen Indians. At the first volley Bentz had his belt cut away by a ball, and lost his revolver. The soldiers turned to fly, but, as they galloped off, another ball entered Bentz' side, desperately wounding him. They now rode down the cañon, hoping to rejoin Captain Mitchell's party, but soon saw a body of Indians riding down the bluff ahead of them, evidently with the design of cutting them off. Wise told Bentz to ride hard, at the same time handing him one of his revolvers, to defend himself in case of emergency. Bentz was very feeble and dizzy, so much so, indeed, that he could barely sit in the saddle.

"Wise was mounted on a superb horse belonging to Lieutenant Cutler, which he had taken out to exercise, and, seeing that the Indians would head them off, and that Bentz, who was riding an old mule, could not keep up, he gave the powerful brute rein, and shot down the cañon like an arrow. He passed the intervening Indians in safety, just as three of them dashed out of a pocket in the bluff and cut off poor Bentz.

"Wise saw Bentz knocked from his mule, and, knowing it was useless to try to save him, left him to his fate, and thought only of saving his own life. He rode hard for Captain Mitchell, who was not far distant, but before he could reach him another party of Sioux headed him off, and he turned and rode up the bluffs to the flat lands. The Indians pursued him, and made every effort to kill or capture him, but his fine horse bore him out of every danger. Three times he was cut off from the camp, but by taking a wide circuit he managed to ride around the Indians, and at last succeeded in reaching the high road above the camp. As many settlers lived on this road, the Indians did not venture to follow him along it, and he was soon safely housed in the log-cabin of a frontiersman, and relating his adventures.

"Meanwhile Captain Mitchell, having seen the fate of Bentz and escape of Wise, made haste to assemble his party, and, lifting those who were too weak to climb into the wagon, they set off for the camp. Mitchell and Anderson were the only two of the party who had arms, but they assured the sick men they would defend them to the last. Anderson took the lines and drove, while Mitchell seated himself in the rear end of the ambulance, with a Henry rifle to keep off the Indians.

"They had not gone far before they came upon a large force of warriors drawn across the cañon, to cut off their retreat. The bluffs were very steep and high on both sides of them, and escape seemed impossible; nevertheless Mitchell ordered Anderson to run his team at the right-hand bluff and try and ascend it. The spirited animals dashed up the steep bank and drew the wagon nearly half-way up, when one of the wheels balked and nearly overturned the wagon. A loud yell from the savages, at this moment, so frightened the horses that they sprang forward, and, before they could appreciate it, they were over the bluff on the level prairie, and flying toward the camp at the rate of ten miles an hour.

"They now began to hope, but had only gone as far as the first plum grove when they saw the Indians circling around them, and once more getting between them and the post. Still they hoped that some soldiers might be in the first grove gathering plums, or that Wise had reached the post and given the alarm, so that help would soon come to them. Captain Mitchell fired his rifle once or twice, to attract the attention of any persons who might be in the plum grove, but there was no response, and Anderson drove rapidly on.

"The Indians now began to close in upon the ambulance from all sides. They would ride swiftly by a few yards distant, and, swinging themselves behind the neck and shoulders of their ponies, fire arrows or balls into the wagon. Two of the sick men had already been wounded, and Captain Mitchell, finding it impossible to defend them while the ambulance was in motion, the shaking continually destroying his aim, ordered Anderson to drive to the top of the hill near by, and they would fight it out with the redskins. Cramer now took the lines, when, either through fear or because he did not believe in the policy of stopping, he kept straight on. Captain Mitchell twice ordered Cramer to pull up, but, as he paid no attention, he told Anderson to take the lines from him. In attempting to obey the Captain's order, Anderson lost his footing and fell out of the wagon. The Captain now sprang forward, put his foot on the brake to lock the wheels, when a sudden lurch of the wagon caused him to lose his balance, and he fell headlong on the prairie. Fortunately, he alighted near a deep gully, where the water had cut out the bank, and, rolling himself into it, he looked out and saw Anderson crawling into a bunch of bushes near by. When these accidents happened, the ambulance had just crossed over the crest of a little hill, and, as the Indians had not come over as yet, they did not see either of the men fall from the wagon. The Captain had only two revolvers, but Anderson's gun, a Spencer rifle, had been thrown out with him, and he picked it up and took it into the bushes.

"In a few moments the Indians came up, riding very fast, and the main body crossed the ravine near where Captain Mitchell lay. Some of them jumped their horses directly over the spot where he was concealed, but in a few moments they were gone, and soon had disappeared behind the neighbouring divide, leaving the Captain and Anderson to their own reflections. What to do was the next question. That the Indians would overtake the ambulance, kill all its occupants, and return, the Captain had not a doubt. He determined to go down the ravine, and, calling Anderson to follow, started off. He had already crawled some distance when, hearing the clatter of horses' hoofs, he peeped over the edge of his cover, and saw about seventy-five Indians riding directly up to where he was concealed. Giving himself up for lost, he lay down, drawing his revolvers and preparing them for action, for he was determined not to let the savages have his scalp without making a desperate resistance. The warriors came up, and, dismounting within thirty yards of him, began a lively conversation. The chief walked up close to the brink of the ravine, and almost within arm's-length of the Captain, and stood gazing on the ground. Mitchell now saw the chief was blind of an eye and wore a spotted head-dress; and he knew by these marks he was none other than the celebrated Sioux warrior, Spotted Tail. On making this discovery the Captain levelled both his revolvers at the chief's breast, and was fully determined to fire. He believed that the loss of five captains would be a small matter, if by their death they could secure the destruction of the great leader of the Sioux. Just as he was about to pull the triggers a loud shout from the warriors caused Spotted Tail to start forward and run rapidly up the hill. The ponies were led down the ravine and the warriors scattered in all directions, seeking cover. One of them ensconced himself in the ravine not more than thirty feet from Mitchell. Raising his head so that he could see out, the Captain endeavoured to ascertain what caused all the excitement among the Indians. At first he had thought he was discovered, then that reënforcements from the fort had arrived, and a battle was about to begin; but now he saw Anderson was discovered. When the Captain had started down the ravine Anderson had followed him, and just emerged from the bushes when the Indians suddenly came up. He had dropped on the ground, and endeavoured to roll himself back among the sage-brush, when an Indian saw him and gave the alarm. The warriors, not knowing how many white men might be in the brush, with their usual caution, had immediately sought cover.

"A hot fire was opened on Anderson's position, and at first he did not respond at all. A warrior, more bold than discreet, ventured to go closer to the bushes, when a small puff of white smoke was seen to rise, a loud report rang out on the air, and the warrior fell, pierced through the heart. A yell of rage resounded over the hills, and three more Indians ran toward Anderson's cover. Three reports followed each other in rapid succession, and the three Indians bit the dust. There was now a general charge on Anderson, but he fired so fast and true that the Indians fell back, carrying with them two more of their number.

"The Captain now felt it his duty to help Anderson, and was about to open fire with his revolvers, when Anderson, who, no doubt, expected as much, yelled three or four times, saying in a sort of a cry, 'My arm is broken; keep quiet; can't work the Spencer any more.' The brave fellow no doubt intended this as a warning to the Captain not to discover himself by firing, and he reluctantly accepted the admonition and kept quiet.

"A rush by some thirty warriors was now made on Anderson, and, notwithstanding his disabled condition, he managed to kill three more Indians before he was taken. He was overpowered, however, dragged out of the bushes, and scalped in full sight of the Captain. He fought to the last, and compelled them to kill him to save their own lives. Nothing could exceed the rage of the Indians, and especially old Spotted Tail, as he saw the body of warrior after warrior carried down the hill, until nine dead Indians were laid beside Anderson. In his grief for the loss of his braves, the old chief kicked the corpse of poor Anderson, and the other Indians came up and mutilated it horribly.

"In a few minutes after the death of Anderson, a mounted party was seen coming over the hills, and about thirty warriors rode up to Spotted Tail, and reported that they had captured the ambulance and killed all who were in it. They exhibited to Spotted Tail the scalps of all Captain Mitchell's late companions, except that of Cramer. The ambulance horses were brought back, each carrying what is known 'down East' as a 'noble red man.'

"In a few moments the warriors had their dead comrades securely strapped to ponies, and, mounting their own, set out toward the Republican. As soon as they were out of sight, and it became dark, Captain Mitchell started for the camp, where he arrived about ten o'clock, and told the story of the 'Cottonwood Massacre,' as I have here related it.

"Early the next morning I was sent out with a large force to pursue and, if possible, overtake and punish the Indians. For two days I followed them hard, and, on the evening of the second day, came upon a small party as they were crossing a stream, but in attempting to charge them, they scattered over the prairie and were soon lost in the darkness. The trail now divided in every direction, and it would have been impossible to follow it unless each soldier had pursued some half a dozen warriors, when it is not likely he would have returned. So we turned back, and marched for Cottonwood. The bodies of the dead had been brought in and buried, and everything had been found as Captain Mitchell had stated.

"Private Wise was severely censured for not immediately going to camp and giving the alarm, but he said he had no idea the wagon and its sick men had ever left the cañon, for there were at least one hundred and fifty warriors around it when he came away, so he thought he might as well rest until morning before bearing such dismal news as he had to communicate to his fellow-soldiers."

In 1867 nearly all the Plains tribes of Indians evinced a sullen disposition, and the indications were that the country was on the eve of a prolonged savage war. The cause of this, perhaps, might well be attributed to the encroachments by the whites, upon the great hunting-grounds of the tribes. The transcontinental lines of railway were nearly completed and in their wake followed an immigration from the Eastern states, unprecedented in the history of the nation. President Andrew Johnson appointed a Peace Commission, composed of a large number of the most distinguished men of the country, both military and civil. Their duty was to visit the various chiefs, and endeavour to make such treaties with them as would ensure permanent peace. History shows that so far as the object for which it was created is concerned, it was a stupendous farce. Let it be understood, however, that the failure to accomplish the work intended, was through no fault of the Commission. The fault lies with Congress which neglected to make the necessary appropriations to carry out the stipulations of the treaties. On account of this broken faith on the part of the govern-

Man afraid of his Horses.

ment there occurred a series of massacres, and a prolonged war, which cost millions of dollars.[1]

One of the stipulations on the part of the Commission was that the Sioux, Arapahoes, and Cheyennes were to surrender that portion of their country along the Big Horn Mountains and territory tributary to them. The Man afraid of his Horses and Red Cloud were very determined in their opposition, and Red Cloud with his entire band withdrew, shortly after commencing his work of mischief. It is a fact that so indignant and enraged were the Indians at the idea of the government depriving them of their favourite hunting-grounds, that a messenger, sent out to induce the chiefs to come in, was badly whipped, insulted, and ordered to go back to where he came from.

Red Cloud

Old Major Bridger, the celebrated scout, and Jack Stead,[2] the interpreter of the Commission, had no faith in the propositions of some of the chiefs, notably Black Horse, who agreed to accept the proposition of the Commission and ally themselves with the whites. These chiefs were the representatives of over a hundred lodges; they had been out on a hunt when they met Red Cloud who stated to them that they must join the Sioux and drive the white man back. To their honour be it said, these chiefs kept their word and fulfilled to the letter the pledges to keep the peace which they had given the Commission.

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[1] The Southern Cheyennes, Kiowas, and Arapahoes waged an unrelenting war along the whole line of the border from Nebraska to Texas, under the leadership of the dreaded Sa-tan-ta.

[2] Jack Stead was a runaway sailor boy. He was on the Peacock when it was wrecked years ago near the mouth of the Columbia River. He lived for years in the Rocky Mountains, and was the first man to report to the United States government the Mormon preparations to resist it. He had a Cheyenne wife, was a good story-teller, and loved whiskey.

Following the so-called treaty a series of depredations was made by discontented bands of Indians, and culminated in the massacre of troops near Fort Phil Kearny. The following account of this fight is taken from Senate Document No. 13, 1867:—

"On the morning of December 21 the picket at the signal station signalled to the fort that the wood train was attacked by the Indians, and corralled, and the escort fighting. This was not far from 11 o'clock A.M., and the train was about two miles from the fort, and moving toward the timber. Almost immediately a few Indian pickets appeared on one or two of the surrounding heights, and a party of about twenty near the Big Piney, where the mountain road crossed the same, within howitzer range of the fort. Shells were thrown among them from the artillery in the fort, and they fled.

"The following detail, viz., fifty men and two officers from the four different infantry companies, and twenty-six cavalrymen and one officer, was made by Colonel Carrington. The entire force formed in good order, and was placed under command of Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel Fetterman, who received the following orders from Colonel Carrington: 'Support the wood train, relieve it, and report to me. Do not engage or pursue Indians at its expense; under no circumstances pursue over Lodge Trail Ridge.' These instructions were repeated by Colonel Carrington in a loud voice, to the command when in motion, and outside the fort, and again delivered in substance through Lieutenant Wands, officer of the day, to

Lieutenant Grummond, who was requested to communicate them again to Colonel Fetterman.

"Colonel Fetterman moved out rapidly to the right of the wood road, for the purpose, no doubt, of cutting off the retreat of the Indians then attacking the train. As he advanced across the Piney, a few Indians appeared in his front and on his flanks, and continued flitting about him, beyond rifle range, till they disappeared beyond Lodge Trail Ridge. When he was on Lodge Trail Ridge, the picket signalled the fort that the Indians had retreated from the train; the train had broken corral and moved on toward the timber. The train made the round trip, and was not again disturbed that day.

"At about fifteen minutes before twelve o'clock, Colonel Fetterman's command had reached the crest of Lodge Trail Ridge, was deployed as skirmishers, and at a halt. Without regard to orders, for reasons that the silence of Colonel Fetterman now prevents us from giving, he, with the command, in a few moments disappeared, having cleared the ridge, still moving north. Firing at once commenced, and increased in rapidity till, in about fifteen minutes and at about 12 o'clock M., it was a continuous and rapid fire of musketry, plainly audible at the fort. Assistant Surgeon Hines, having been ordered to join Fetterman, found Indians on a part of Lodge Trail Ridge not visible from the fort, and could not reach the force there struggling to preserve its existence. As soon as the firing became rapid Colonel Carrington ordered Captain Ten Eyck, with about seventy-six men, being all the men for duty in the fort, and two wagons with ammunition, to join Colonel Fetterman immediately. He moved out and advanced rapidly toward the point from which the sound of firing proceeded, but did not move by so short a route as he might have done. The sound of firing continued to be heard during his advance, diminishing in rapidity and number of shots till he reached a high summit overlooking the battle-field, at about a quarter before one o'clock, when one or two shots closed all sound of conflict.

"Whether he could have reached the scene of action by marching over the shortest route as rapidly as possible in time to have relieved Colonel Fetterman's command, I am unable to determine.

"Immediately after Captain Ten Eyck moved out, and by orders of Colonel Carrington issued at the same time as the orders detailing that officer to join Colonel Fetterman, the quartermaster's employees, convalescents, and all others in the garrison, were armed and provided with ammunition, and held in readiness to reënforce the troops fighting, or defend the garrison.

"Captain Ten Eyck reported, as soon as he reached a summit commanding a view of the battle-field, that the Peno Valley was full of Indians; that he could see nothing of Colonel Fetterman's party, and requested that a howitzer should be sent him. The howitzer was not sent. The Indians, who at first beckoned him to come down, now commenced retreating, and Captain Ten Eyck, advancing to a point where the Indians had been standing in a circle, found the dead naked bodies of Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel Fetterman, Captain Brown, and about sixty-five of the soldiers of their command. At this point there were no indications of a severe struggle. All the bodies lay in a space not exceeding thirty-five feet in diameter. No empty cartridge shells were lying about, and there were some full cartridges. A few American horses lay dead a short distance off, all with their heads toward the fort. This spot was by the roadside, and beyond the summit of the hill rising to the east of Peno Creek. The road, after rising this hill, follows this ridge along for about half or three-quarters of a mile, and then descends abruptly to

Peno Creek. At about half the distance from where these bodies lay to the point where the road commences to descend to Peno Creek was the dead body of Lieutenant Grummond; and still farther on, at the point where the road commences to descend to Peno Creek, were the dead bodies of the three citizens and four or five of the old, long-tried, and experienced soldiers. A great number of empty cartridge shells were on the ground at this point, and more than fifty lying on the ground about one of the dead citizens, who used a Henry rifle. Within a few hundred yards in front of this position ten Indian ponies lay dead, and there were sixty-five pools of dark and clotted blood. No Indian ponies or pools of blood were found at any other point. Our conclusion, therefore, is that the Indians were massed to resist Colonel Fetterman's advance along Peno Creek on both sides of the road; that Colonel Fetterman formed his advanced lines on the summit of the hill overlooking the creek and valley, with a reserve near where the large number of dead bodies lay; that the Indians, in force of from fifteen to eighteen hundred warriors, attacked him vigorously in this position, and were successfully resisted by him for half an hour or more; that the command then being short of ammunition, and seized with panic at this event and the great numerical superiority of the Indians, attempted to retreat toward the fort; that the mountaineers and old soldiers, who had learned that a movement from Indians, in an engagement, was equivalent to death, remained in their first position, and were killed there; that immediately upon the commencement of the retreat the Indians charged upon and surrounded the party, who could not now be formed by their officers, and were immediately killed. Only six men of the whole command were killed by balls, and two of these, Lieutenant-Colonel Fetterman and Captain Brown, no doubt inflicted this death upon themselves, or each other, by their own hands, for both were shot through the left temple, and powder burnt into the skin and flesh about the wound. These officers had also oftentimes asserted that they would not be taken alive by Indians.

"In the critical examination we have given this painful and horrible affair, we do not find of the immediate participants any officer living deserving of censure; and, even if evidence justifies it, it would ill become us to speak evil of or censure those dead who sacrificed life struggling to maintain the authority and power of the government and add new lustre to our arms and fame. . . .

"The difficulty, in a 'nutshell,' was that the commanding officer of the district was furnished no more troops or supplies for this state of war than had been provided and furnished him for a state of profound peace."

Laramie Peak.

CHAPTER XVI

BUFFALO BILL'S[1] ADVENTURES ON THE SALT LAKE TRAIL — IN CHARGE OF A HERD OF BEEF CATTLE — KILLS AN INDIAN — WITH LEW SIMPSON — HELD UP — ATTACKED AT CEDAR BLUFFS — A BRUSH WITH SIOUX — THE PRINT OF A WOMAN'S SHOE — CAPTURE A VILLAGE — BUFFALO BILL SHOOTS TALL BULL

IN May, 1857, I started for Salt Lake City with a herd of beef cattle, in charge of Frank and Bill McCarthy, for General Albert Sidney Johnston's army, which was then being sent across the plains to fight the Mormons.

"Nothing occurred to interrupt our journey until we reached Plum Creek, on the South Platte River, thirty-five miles west of old Fort Kearny. We had made a morning drive and had camped for dinner. The wagon-masters and a majority of the men had gone to sleep under the mess wagons; the cattle were being guarded by three men, and the cook was preparing dinner. No one had any idea that Indians were anywhere near us. The first warning we had that they were infesting that part of the country was the firing of shots, and the whoops and yells from a party of them, who, catching us napping, gave us a most unwelcome surprise. All the men jumped to their feet and seized their guns. They saw with astonishment the cattle running in every direction, stampeded by the Indians, who had shot and killed the three men who were on day-herd duty; and the red devils were now charging down upon the rest of us.

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[1] William Frederick Cody ("Buffalo Bill"), the scout, guide, and Indian fighter, was born on the 26th of February, 1846, in a primitive log-cabin in the backwoods of Iowa. In 1852, the family removed to Kansas, where the father of young Cody, two years later, became a

"I then thought of mother's fears of my falling into the hands of the Indians, and I had about made up my mind that such was to be my fate; but when I saw how coolly and determinedly the McCarthy brothers were conducting themselves and giving orders to the little band, I became convinced that we would 'stand the Indians off,' as the saying is. Our men were all well armed with Colt's revolvers and Mississippi yagers, which last carried a bullet and two buckshot.

"The McCarthy boys, at the proper moment, gave orders to fire upon the advancing enemy. The volley checked them, although they returned the compliment, and shot one of our party through the leg. Frank McCarthy then sang out, 'Boys, make a break for the slough yonder, and we can have the bank for a breastwork.'

"We made a run for the slough, which was only a short distance off, and succeeded in safely reaching it, bringing with us the wounded man. The bank proved to be a

martyr to the Free State cause. From the moment the family was thus deprived of its support, the only boy, though a mere child, at the age of nine years, commenced his career. As a collaborator in the preparation of this work, he has been prevailed upon to relate all the incidents of his life, so far as they are confined to the region of which this volume treats. For his further adventures in the Arkansas Valley and south of it, see *The Old Santa Fé Trail.*

very effective breastwork, affording us good protection. We had been there but a short time when Frank McCarthy, seeing that the longer we were corralled the worse it would be for us, said: —

"'Well, boys, we'll try to make our way back to Fort Kearny by wading in the river and keeping the bank for a breastwork.'"

"We all agreed that this was the best plan, and we accordingly proceeded down the river several miles in this way, managing to keep the Indians at a safe distance with our guns, until the slough made a junction with the main Platte River. From there down, we found the river at times quite deep; and in order to carry the wounded man along with us, we constructed a raft of poles for his accommodation, and in this way he was transported.

"Occasionally the water would be too deep for us to wade, and we were obliged to put our weapons on the raft and swim. The Indians followed us pretty close, and were continually watching for an opportunity to get a good range and give us a raking fire. Covering ourselves by keeping well under the bank, we pushed ahead as rapidly as possible, and made pretty good progress, the night finding us still on the way and our enemies yet on our track.

"I, being the youngest and smallest of the party, became somewhat tired, and without noticing it I had fallen behind the others for some little distance. It was about ten o'clock and we were keeping very quiet and hugging close to the bank, when I happened to look up to the moonlit sky and saw the plumed head of an Indian peeping over the bank. Instead of hurrying ahead and alarming the men in a quiet way, I instantly aimed my gun at his head and fired. The report rang out sharp and loud on the night air, and was immediately followed by an Indian whoop; and the next moment about six feet of dead Indian came tumbling into the river. I was not only overcome with astonishment, but was badly scared, as I could hardly realize what I had done. I expected to see the whole force of Indians come down upon us. While I was standing thus bewildered, the men who had heard the shot and the war-whoop and had seen the Indian take a tumble, came rushing back.

"'Who fired that shot?' cried Frank McCarthy.

"'I did,' replied I, rather proudly, as my confidence returned and I saw the men coming up.

"'Yes, and little Billy has killed an Indian stone-dead — too dead to skin,' said one of the men, who had approached nearer than the rest, and had almost stumbled over the corpse. From that time forward I became a hero and an Indian killer. This was, of course, the first Indian I had ever shot, and as I was then not more than eleven years of age, my exploit created quite a sensation.

"The other Indians, upon learning what had happened to their advance, fired several shots without effect, but which hastened our retreat down the river. We reached Fort Kearny just as the reveille was being sounded, bringing the wounded man with us. After the peril through which we had passed, it was a relief to feel that once more I was safe after such a dangerous initiation.

"Frank McCarthy immediately reported to the commanding officer and informed him of all that had happened. The commandant at once ordered a company of cavalry and one of infantry to proceed to Plum Creek on a forced march — taking a howitzer with them — to endeavour to recapture the cattle from the Indians.

"The firm of Russell, Majors, & Waddell had a division agent at Kearny, and this agent mounted us on mules so that we could accompany the troops. On reaching the place where the Indians had surprised us, we found the bodies of the three men, whom they had killed and scalped and literally cut into pieces. We, of course, buried the remains. We caught but few of the cattle; the most of them had been driven off and stampeded with the buffaloes, there being numerous immense herds of the latter in that section of the country at the time. The Indians' trail was discovered running South toward the Republican River, and the troops followed it to the head of Plum Creek, and there abandoned it, returning to Fort Kearny without having seen a single redskin.

"The company's agent, seeing that there was no further use for us in that vicinity — as we had lost our cattle and mules — sent us back to Fort Leavenworth. The company, it is proper to state, did not have to stand the loss of the expedition, as the government held itself responsible for such depredations by the Indians.

"On the day that I got into Leavenworth, sometime in July, I was interviewed for the first time in my life by a newspaper reporter, and the next morning I found my name in print as 'the youngest Indian slayer on the plains.' I am candid enough to admit that I felt very much elated over this notoriety. Again and again I read with eager interest the long and sensational account of our adventure. My exploit was related in a very graphic manner, and for a long time afterward I was considerable of a hero. The reporter who had thus set me up, as I then thought, on the highest pinnacle of fame, was John Hutchinson, and I felt very grateful to him. He now lives in Wichita, Kansas.

"In the following summer, Russell, Majors, & Waddell entered upon a contract with the Government for transporting supplies for General Albert Sidney Johnston's army that was sent against the Mormons. A large number of teams and teamsters were required for this purpose, and as the route was considered a dangerous one, men

"BRONCHO BUSTING"

were not easily engaged for the service, though the pay was forty dollars a month in gold. An old wagonmaster named Lew Simpson, one of the best who ever commanded a bull-train, was upon the point of starting with about ten wagons for the company, direct for Salt Lake, and as he had known me for some time as an ambitious youth, requested me to accompany him as an extra hand. My duties would be light, and in fact I would have nothing to do, unless some one of the drivers should become sick, in which case I should be required to take his place. But even more seductive than this was the promise that I should be provided with a mule of my own to ride, and be subject to the orders of no one save Simpson himself.

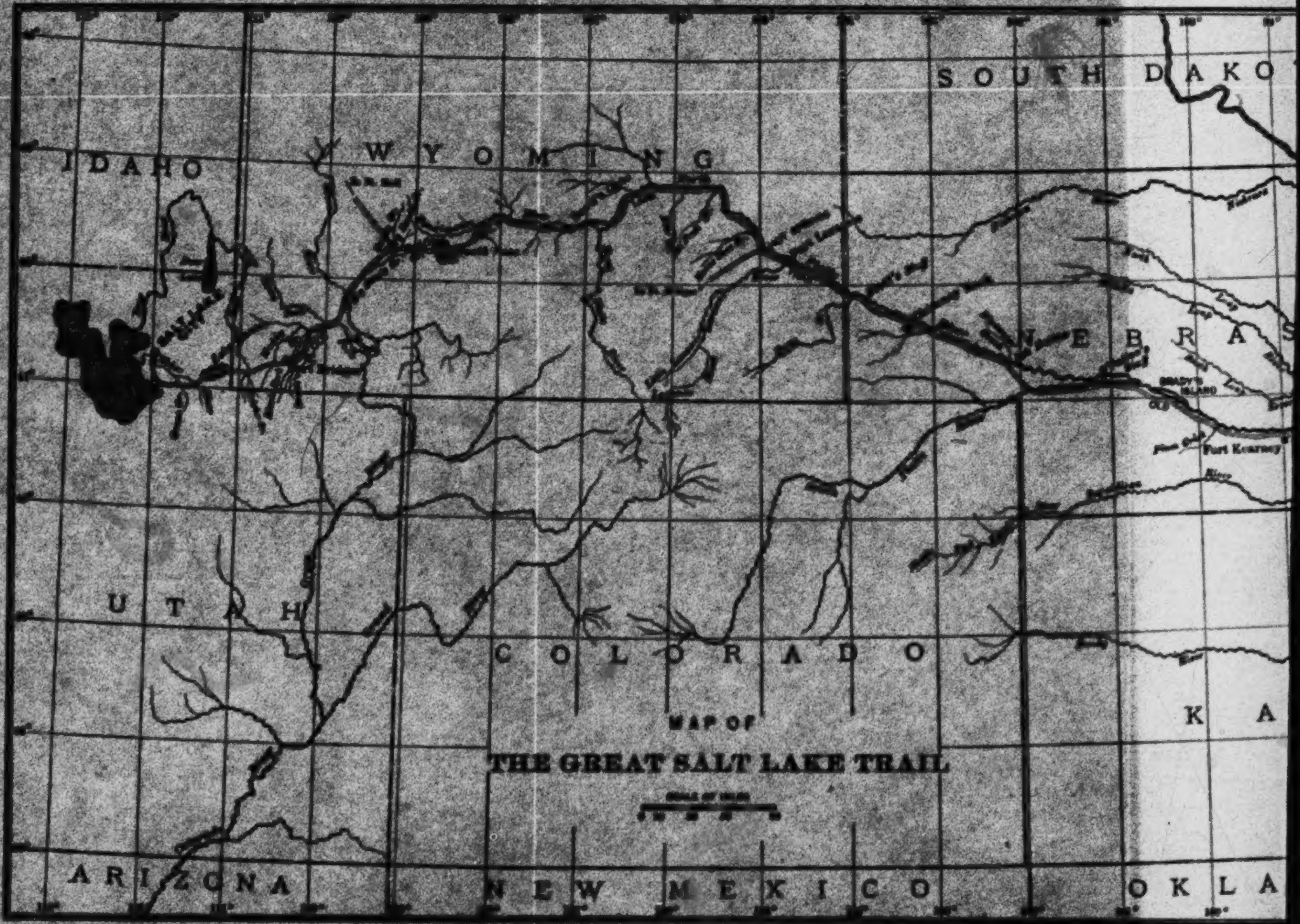
"The offer was made in such a manner that I became at once wild to go, but my mother interposed an emphatic objection and urged me to abandon so reckless a desire. She reminded me that in addition to the fact that the trip would possibly occupy a year, the journey was one of extreme peril, beset as it was by Mormon assassins and treacherous Indians, and begged me to accept the lesson of my last experience and narrow escape as a providential warning. But to her pleadings and remonstrances I returned the answer that I had determined to follow the plains as an occupation, and while I appreciated her advice, and desired greatly to honour her commands, yet I could not forego my determination to accompany the train.

"Seeing that it was impossible to keep me at home, she reluctantly gave her consent, but not until she had called upon Mr. Russell and Mr. Simpson in regard to the matter, and had obtained from the latter gentleman his promise that I should be well taken care of, if we had to winter in the mountains. She did not like the appearance of Simpson, and upon inquiry she learned, to her dismay, that he was a desperate character, and that on nearly every trip he had made across the plains he had killed some one. Such a man, she thought, was not a fit master or companion for her son, and she was very anxious to have me go with some other wagon-master; but I still insisted on remaining with Simpson.

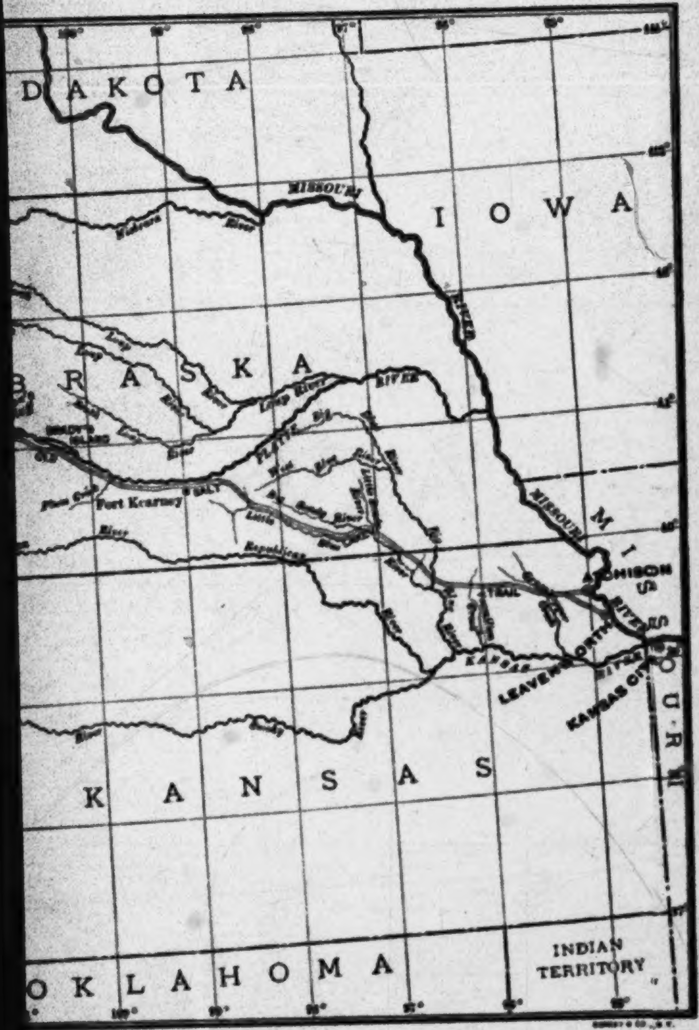
"'Madam, I can assure you that Lew Simpson is one of the most reliable wagon-masters on the plains,' said Mr. Russell, 'and he has taken a great fancy to Billy. If your boy is bound to go, he can go with no better man. No one will dare to impose on him while he is with Lew Simpson, whom I will instruct to take good care of the boy. Upon reaching Fort Laramie, Billy can, if he wishes, exchange places with some fresh man coming back on a returning train, and thus come home without making the whole trip.'

"This seemed to satisfy mother, and then she had a long talk with Simpson himself, imploring him not to forget his promise to take good care of her precious boy. He promised everything that she asked.

"Thus, after much trouble, I became one of the members of Simpson's train. Before taking our departure, I arranged with Russell, Majors, & Waddell that when my pay fell due it should be paid over to my mother. As a matter of interest to the general reader, it may be well in this connection to give a brief description of a freight train. The wagons used in those days by Russell, Majors, & Waddell were known as the 'J. Murphy wagons,' made at St. Louis specially for the plains business. They were very large and very strongly built, being capable of carrying seven thousand pounds of freight each. The wagon-boxes were very commodious — being about as large as the rooms of an ordinary house — and were covered with two heavy canvas sheets to protect the merchandise from the rain. These wagons were generally sent out from



MAP OF
THE GREAT SALT LAKE TRAIL


DAKOTA
IOWA
MISSOURI RIVER
Niobrara River
Loup
Loup
Loup River
Loup River
PLATTE RIVER
Fort Kearney
Plum Creek
Big Blue
Little Blue
Big Sandy River
Republican
River
KANSAS RIVER
TRAIL
ATCHISON
LEAVENWORTH
KANSAS CITY
MISSOURI
KANSAS
Smoky
River
OKLAHOMA
INDIAN TERRITORY
100°
99°
98°
97°
96°
95°
43°
42°
41°
40°
39°
37°

Leavenworth, each loaded with six thousand pounds of freight, and each drawn by several yokes of oxen in charge of one driver. A train consisted of twenty-five wagons, all in charge of one man, who was known as the wagon-master. The second man in command was the assistant wagon-master; then came the 'extra hand,' next the night herder; and lastly, the cavayard driver, whose duty it was to drive the lame and loose cattle. There were thirty-one men all told in a train. The men did their own cooking, being divided into messes of seven. One man cooked, another brought wood and water, another stood guard, and so on,—each having some duty to perform while getting meals. All were heavily armed with Colt's pistols and Mississippi yagers, and every one always had his weapons handy so as to be prepared for any emergency.

"The wagon-master, in the language of the plains, was called the 'bull-wagon boss'; the teamsters were known as 'bull-whackers'; and the whole train was denominated a 'bull-outfit.' Everything at that time was called an 'outfit.' The men of the plains were always full of droll humour and exciting stories of their own experiences, and many an hour I spent in listening to the recitals of thrilling adventures and hairbreadth escapes.

"The trail to Salt Lake ran through Kansas northwestwardly, crossing the Big Blue River, then over the Big and Little Sandy, coming into Nebraska near the Big Sandy. The next stream of any importance was the Little Blue, along which the trail ran for sixty miles; then crossed a range of sand-hills, and struck the Platte River ten miles below old Fort Kearny; thence the course lay up the South Platte to the old Ash Hollow Crossing, thence eighteen miles across to the North Platte, near the mouth of the Blue Water, where General Harney had his great battle in 1855 with the Sioux and Cheyenne Indians. From this point the North Platte was followed, passing Court House Rock, Chimney Rock, and Scott's Bluffs, and then on to Fort Laramie, where the Laramie River was crossed. Still following the North Platte for some considerable distance, the trail crossed the river at old Richard's Bridge, and followed it up to the celebrated Red Buttes, crossing the Willow Creeks to the Sweetwater, passing the great Independence Rock and the Devil's Gate, up to the Three Crossings of the Sweetwater, thence past the Cold Springs, where, three feet under the sod, on the hottest day of summer, ice can be found; thence to the Hot Springs and the Rocky Ridge, and through the Rocky Mountains and Echo Cañon, and thence on to the Great Salt Lake Valley.

"In order to take care of the business which then offered, the freight for transportation being almost exclusively government provisions, Russell, Majors, & Waddell operated thirty-five hundred wagons, for the hauling of which they used forty thousand oxen, and gave employment to four thousand men; the capital invested by these three freighters was nearly two million dollars. In their operations, involving such an immense sum of money, and employing a class of labourers incomparably reckless, some very stringent rules were adopted by them, to which all their employees were made to subscribe. In this code of discipline was the following obligation: 'I, ——, do hereby solemnly swear, before the Great and Living God, that during my engagement, and while I am in the employ of Russell, Majors, & Waddell, that I will under no circumstances use profane language; that I will drink no intoxicating liquors of any kind; that I will not quarrel or fight with any other employee of the firm, and that in every respect I will conduct myself honestly, be faithful to my duties, and so direct all my acts as will win the confidence and esteem of my employers, so help me God.'

"This oath was the creation of Mr. Majors, who was a very pious and rigid disciplinarian; he tried hard to enforce it, but how great was his failure it is needless to say. It would have been equally profitable had the old gentleman read the riot act to a herd of stampeded buffaloes. And he believes it himself now.

"The next day we rolled out of camp and proceeded on our way toward the setting sun. Everything ran along smoothly with us from that point until we came within about eighteen miles of Green River, in the Rocky Mountains — where we camped at noon. At this place we had to drive our cattle about a mile and a half to a creek to water them. Simpson, his assistant, George Woods, and myself, accompanied by the usual number of guards, drove the cattle over to the creek, and while on our way back to camp we suddenly observed a party of twenty horsemen rapidly approaching us. We were not yet in view of the wagons, as a rise of ground intervened, and therefore we could not signal the train-men in case of any unexpected danger befalling us. We had no suspicion, however, that we were about to be trapped, as the strangers were white men. When they had come up to us, one of the party, who evidently was the leader, rode out in front and said: —

"'How are you, Mr. Simpson?'

"'You've got the best of me, sir,' said Simpson, who did not know him.

"'Well, I rather think I have,' coolly replied the stranger, whose words conveyed a double meaning, as we soon learned. We had all come to a halt by this time and the strange horsemen had surrounded us. They were all armed with double-barrelled shot-guns, rifles, and revolvers. We also were armed with revolvers, but we had no idea of danger, and these men, much to our surprise, had 'got the drop' on us and had covered us with their weapons, so that we were completely at their mercy. The whole movement of corralling us was done so quietly and quickly that it was accomplished before we knew it.

"'I'll trouble you for your six-shooters, gentlemen,' now said the leader.

"'I'll give 'em to you in a way you don't want,' replied Simpson.

"The next moment three guns were levelled at Simpson. 'If you make a move you're a dead man,' said the leader.

"Simpson saw that he was taken at a great disadvantage, and thinking it advisable not to risk the lives of the party by any rash act on his part, he said: 'I see now that you have the best of me; but who are you, anyhow?'

"'I am Joe Smith,' was the reply.

"'What! the leader of the Danites?' asked Simpson.

"'You are correct,' said Smith, for he it was.

"'Yes,' said Simpson, 'I know you now; you are a spying scoundrel.'

"Simpson had good reasons for calling him this and for applying to him a much more opprobrious epithet, for only a short time before this, Joe Smith had visited our train in the disguise of a teamster, and had remained with us two days. He suddenly disappeared, no one knowing where he had gone or why he had come among us. But it was all explained to us now that he had returned with his Mormon Danites. After they had disarmed us, Simpson asked, 'Well, Smith, what are you going to do with us?'

"'Ride back with us and I'll soon show you,' said Smith.

"We had no idea of the surprise which awaited us. As we came upon the top of the ridge, from which we could view our camp, we were astonished to see the remainder of the train-men disarmed, stationed in a group, and surrounded by another squad of Danites, while other Mormons were searching our wagons for such articles as they wanted.

"'How is this?' inquired Simpson. 'How did you surprise my camp without a struggle? I can't understand it.'

"'Easily enough,' said Smith; 'your men were all asleep under the wagons, except the cooks, who saw us coming and took us for returning Californians or emigrants, and paid no attention to us until we rode up and surrounded your train. With our arms covering the men, we woke them up, and told them all they had to do was to walk out and drop their pistols — which they saw was the best thing to do under circumstances over which they had no control — and you can just bet they did it.'

"'And what do you propose to do with us now?' asked Simpson.

"'I intend to burn your train,' said he; 'you are loaded with supplies and ammunition for Sidney Johnston, and as I have no way to convey the stuff to my own people, I'll see that it does not reach the United States troops.'

"'Are you going to turn us adrift here?' asked Simpson, who was anxious to learn what was going to become of himself and his men.

"'No; I am hardly so bad as that. I'll give you enough provisions to last you until you can reach Fort Bridger,' replied Smith; 'and as soon as your cooks can get the stuff out of the wagons, you can start.'

"'On foot?' was the laconic inquiry of Simpson.

"'Yes, sir,' was the equally short reply.

"'Smith, that's too rough on us men. Put yourself in our place and see how you would like it,' said Simpson; 'you can well afford to give us at least one wagon and six yokes of oxen to convey us and our clothing and provisions to Fort Bridger. You're a brute if you don't do this.'

"'Well,' said Smith, after consulting a minute or two with some of his company, 'I'll do that much for you.'

"The cattle and the wagon were brought up according to his orders, and the clothing and provisions were loaded on.

"'Now you can go,' said Smith, after everything had been arranged.

"'Joe Smith, I think you are a mean coward to set us afloat in a hostile country without giving us our arms,' said Simpson, who had once before asked for the weapons, and had had his request denied.

"Smith, after further consultation with his comrades, said: —

"'Simpson, you are too brave a man to be turned adrift here without any means of defence. You shall have your revolvers and guns.' Our weapons were accordingly handed over to Simpson, and we at once started for Fort Bridger, knowing that it would be useless to attempt the recapture of our train.

"When we had travelled about two miles, we saw the smoke rise from our old camp. The Mormons, after taking what goods they wanted and could carry off, had set fire to the wagons, many of which were loaded with bacon, lard, hard-tack, and other provisions, which made a very hot, fierce fire, and the smoke to roll up in dense clouds. Some of the wagons were loaded with ammunition, and it was not long before loud reports followed in rapid succession. We waited and witnessed the burning of the train, and then pushed on to Fort Bridger. Arriving at this post, we learned that two other trains had been captured and destroyed in the same way, by the Mormons. This made seventy-five wagon loads, or 450,-

000 pounds of supplies, mostly provisions, which never reached General Johnston's command, to which they had been consigned.

"After reaching the fort, it being far in November, we decided to spend the winter there with about four hundred other employees of Russell, Majors, & Waddell, rather than attempt a return, which would have exposed us to many dangers and the severity of the rapidly approaching winter. During this period of hibernation, however, the larders of the commissary became so depleted that we were placed on one-quarter rations, and at length, as a final resort, the poor, dreadfully emaciated mules and oxen were killed to afford sustenance for our famishing party.

"Fort Bridger being located in a prairie, all fuel used there had to be carried for a distance of nearly two miles, and after our mules and oxen were butchered we had no other recourse than to carry the wood on our backs or haul it on sleds, a very tedious and laborious alternative.

"Starvation was beginning to lurk about the post when spring approached, and but for the timely arrival of a westward-bound train loaded with provisions for Johnston's army, some of our party must certainly have fallen victims to deadly hunger.

"The winter finally passed away, and early in the spring, as soon as we could travel, the civil employees of the government, with the teamsters and freighters, started for the Missouri River, the Johnston expedition having been abandoned. On the way down we stopped at Fort Laramie, and there met a supply-train bound westward. Of course we all had a square meal once more, consisting of hard-tack, bacon, coffee, and beans. I can honestly say that I thought it was the best meal I had ever eaten ; at least I relished it more than any other, and I think the rest of the party did the same.

"On leaving Fort Laramie, Simpson was made brigade wagon-master, and was put in charge of two large wagon-trains, with about four hundred extra men, who were bound for Fort Leavenworth. When we came to Ash Hollow, instead of taking the usual trail over to the South Platte, Simpson decided to follow the North Platte down to its junction with the South Platte. The two trains were travelling about fifteen miles apart, when one morning while Simpson was with the rear train, he told his assistant wagon-master, George Woods, and myself, to saddle up our mules, as he wanted us to go with him and overtake the head train.

"We started off at about eleven o'clock and had ridden about seven miles, when — while we were on a big plateau, back of Cedar Bluffs — we suddenly discovered a band of Indians coming out of the head of a ravine, half a mile distant, and charging down upon us at full speed. I thought that our end had come this time. Simpson, however, was equal to the occasion, for with wonderful promptness he jumped from his jaded mule, and in a trice shot his own animal and ours also, and ordered us to assist him to jerk their bodies into a triangle. This being quickly done, we got inside the barricade of mule flesh and were prepared to receive the Indians. We were each armed with a Mississippi yager and two revolvers, and as the Indians came swooping down on our improvised fort, we opened fire with such good effect that three fell dead at the first volley. This caused them to retreat out of range, as with two exceptions they were armed with bows and arrows, and therefore, to approach near enough to do execution would expose at least several of them to certain death. Seeing that they could not take our little fortification, or drive us from it, they circled around several times, shooting their arrows at us. One of these struck George Woods in the left shoulder, inflicting only a slight wound, however, and several lodged in the bodies of the dead mules; otherwise they did us no harm. The Indians finally galloped off to a safe distance, where our bullets could not reach them, and seemed to be holding a council. This was a lucky move for us, for it gave us an opportunity to reload our guns and pistols, and prepare for the next charge of the enemy. During the brief cessation of hostilities, Simpson extracted the arrow from Woods' shoulder, and put an immense quid of tobacco on the wound. Woods was then ready for business again.

"The Indians did not give us a very long rest, for with another desperate charge, as if to ride over us, they came dashing toward the mule barricade. We gave them a hot reception with our yagers and revolvers. They could not stand or understand the rapidly repeating fire of the revolver, and we checked them again. They circled around us once more and gave us a few parting shots as they rode off, leaving behind them another dead Indian and a horse.

"For two hours afterward they did not seem to be doing anything but holding a council. We made good use of this time by digging up the ground inside the barricade, with our knives, and throwing the loose earth around and over the mules, and we soon had a very respectable fortification. We were not troubled any more that day, but during the night the cunning rascals tried to burn us out by setting fire to the prairie. The buffalo grass was so short that the fire did not trouble us much, but the smoke concealed the Indians from our view, and they thought they could approach close to us without being seen. We were aware of this and kept a sharp lookout, being prepared all the time to receive them. They finally abandoned the idea of surprising us.

"Next morning, bright and early, they gave us one more grand charge, and again we 'stood them off.' They then rode away half a mile or so and formed a circle around us. Each man dismounted and sat down, as if to wait and starve us out. They had evidently seen the advance train pass on the morning of the previous day, and believed that we belonged to that outfit and were trying to overtake it; they had no idea that another train was on its way after us.

"Our hopes of escape from this unpleasant and perilous situation now depended upon the arrival of the rear train, and when we saw that the Indians were going to besiege us instead of renewing their attacks, we felt rather confident of receiving timely assistance. We had expected that the train would be along late in the afternoon of the previous day, and as the morning wore away we were somewhat anxious and uneasy at its non-arrival.

"At last, about ten o'clock, we began to hear in the distance the loud and sharp reports of the big bull-whips, which were handled with great dexterity by the teamsters, and cracked like rifle-shots. These were as welcome sounds to us as were the notes of the bagpipes to the besieged garrison at Lucknow, when the reënforcements were coming up and the pipers were heard playing, 'The Campbells are coming.' In a few moments we saw the lead or head wagon coming slowly over the ridge, which had concealed the train from our view, and soon the whole outfit made its appearance. The Indians observed the approaching train, and, assembling in a group, they held a short consultation. Then they charged upon us once more, for the last time, and as they turned and dashed away over the prairie, we sent our farewell shots rattling after them. The teamsters, seeing the Indians and hearing the shots, came rushing forward to our assistance, but by the time they reached us the redskins had almost disappeared from view. The teamsters eagerly asked us a hundred questions concerning our fight, admired our fort, and praised our pluck. Simpson's remarkable presence of mind in planning the defence was the general topic of conversation among all the men.

"When the teams came up we obtained some water and bandages with which to dress Woods' wound, which had become quite inflamed and painful, and we then put him into one of the wagons. Simpson and myself obtained a remount, bade good-by to our dead mules which had served us so well, and after collecting the ornaments and other plunder from the dead Indians, we left their bodies and bones to bleach on the prairie. The train moved on again and we had no other adventures except several exciting buffalo-hunts on the South Platte, near Plum Creek.

"We arrived at Fort Leavenworth about the middle of July, 1858, when I immediately visited home.

"I had been home only about a month, after returning from Fort Bridger, when I again started out with another train, going this time as assistant wagon-master under Buck Bomer. We went safely through to Fort Laramie, which was our destination, and from there we were ordered to take a load of supplies to a new post called Fort Wallace, which was being established at Cheyenne Pass. We made this trip and got back to Fort Laramie about November 1. I then quit the employ of Russell, Majors, & Waddell, and joined a party of trappers who were sent out by the post trader, Mr. Ward, to trap on the streams of the Chugwater and Laramie for beaver, otter, and other fur animals, and also to poison wolves for their pelts. We were out two months, but as the expedition did not prove very profitable, and was rather dangerous on account of the Indians, we abandoned the enterprise and came into Fort Laramie in the latter part of December.

"Being anxious to return to the Missouri River, I joined with two others, named Scott and Charley, who were also desirous of going East on a visit, bought three ponies and a pack-mule, and we started out together. We made rapid progress on our journey, and nothing worthy of note happened until one afternoon, along the banks of the Little Blue River, we spied a band of Indians hunting on the opposite side of the stream, three miles away. We did not escape their notice, and they gave us a lively chase for two hours, but they could find no good crossing, and as evening came on we finally got away from them.

"We travelled until late in the night, when upon discovering a low, deep ravine which we thought would make a comfortable and safe camping-place, we stopped for a rest. In searching for a good place to make our beds, I found a hole, and called to my companions that I had found a place for a rest. One of the party was to stand guard while the others slept. Scott took the first watch, while Charley and I prepared our beds.

"While clearing out the place we felt something rough, but as it was dark we could not make out what it was. At any rate we concluded that it was bones or sticks of wood; we thought perhaps it might be the bones of some animal which had fallen in there and died. These bones, for such they really proved to be, we pushed one side, and then we lay down. But Charley, being an inveterate smoker, could not resist the temptation of indulging in a smoke before going to sleep. So he sat up and struck a match to light his old pipe. Our subterranean bedchamber was thus illuminated for a moment or two; I sprang to my feet in an instant, for a ghastly and horrifying sight was revealed to us. Eight or ten human skeletons lay scattered upon the ground!

"The light of the match died out, but we had seen enough to convince us that we were in a large grave, into which, perhaps, some unfortunate emigrants, who had been killed by the Indians, had been thrown; or, probably, seeking refuge there, they had been corralled and killed on the spot. If such were the case they had met the fate of thousands of others, whose friends have never heard of them since they left their Eastern homes to seek their fortunes in the far West. However, we did not care to investigate this mystery any further, but we hustled out of that chamber of death and informed Scott of our discovery. Most of the plainsmen are very superstitious, and we were no exception to the general rule. We surely thought that this incident was an evil omen, and that we would be killed if we remained there any longer.

"'Let us dig out of here quicker than we can say Jack Robinson,' said Scott; and we began to 'dig out' at once. We saddled our animals and hurriedly pushed forward through the darkness, travelling several miles before we again went into camp. Next morning it was snowing fiercely, but we proceeded as best we could, and that night we succeeded in reaching Oak Grove Ranch which had been built during the summer. We here obtained comfortable accommodations and plenty to eat and drink — especially the latter.

"Scott and Charley were great lovers and consumers of 'tanglefoot' and they soon got gloriously drunk. They kept it up for three days, during which time they gambled with the ranchmen, who got away with all their money; but little they cared for that, as they had their spree. They finally sobered up, and we resumed our journey, urging our jaded animals as much as they could stand, until we struck Marysville on the Big Blue. From this place to Leavenworth we secured first-rate accommodations along the road, as the country had become pretty well settled.

"In the spring of 1879, the Fifth Cavalry were ordered to the Department of the Platte and took up their line of march for Fort McPherson, Nebraska. We laid over one day at Fort Wallace, to get supplies, and from Fort Wallace we moved down to Sheridan, where the command halted for us to lay in a supply of forage which was stored there. I was still messing with Major Brown, with whom I went into the village to purchase a supply of provisions for our mess; but unfortunately we were in too jolly a mood to fool away money on 'grub.' We bought several articles, however, and put them into the ambulance and sent them back to camp with our cook. The major and myself did not return until reveille next morning. Soon afterward the general sounded 'boots and saddles,' and presently the regiment was on its way to Fort McPherson.

"It was late before we went into camp that night and we were very tired and hungry. Just as Major Brown was having his tent put up, his cook came to us and asked where the provisions were that he had bought the day before.

"'Why, did we not give them to you—did you not bring them to camp in the ambulance?' asked Brown.

"'No, sir; it was only a five-gallon demijohn of whiskey, a five-gallon demijohn of brandy, and two cases of Old Tom-Cat gin,' said the cook.

"'The mischief!' I exclaimed; 'didn't we spend any money for grub at all?'

"'No, sir,' replied the cook.

"'Well, that will do for the present,' said Major Brown.

"It seems that our minds had evidently been running on a different subject than provisions while we were loitering in Sheridan, and we found ourselves, with a two hundred and fifty mile march ahead of us, without anything more inviting than ordinary army rations.

"At this juncture Captain Denny came up and the major apologized for not being able to invite him to take supper with us; but we did the next best thing, and asked him to take a drink. He remarked that that was what he was looking for, and when he learned of our being out of commissary supplies and that we had bought nothing except whiskey, brandy, and gin, he said joyously: —

"'Boys, as we have an abundance, you can eat with *us* and we will drink with *you*.'

"It was a satisfactory arrangement, and from that time forward we traded our liquors for solids. When the rest of the officers heard of what Brown and I had done they all sent us invitations to dine with them at any time. We returned the compliment by inviting them to drink with us whenever they were dry. Although I would not advise anybody to follow our example, yet it is a fact that we got more provisions for our whiskey than the same money, which we paid for the liquor, would have bought; so after all it proved a very profitable investment.

"On reaching North Fork of the Beaver and riding down the valley toward the stream, I suddenly discovered a large, fresh Indian trail. On examination I found it to be scattered all over the valley on both sides of the creek, as if a very large village had recently passed down that way. Judging from the size of the trail, I thought there could not be less than four hundred lodges, or between twenty-five hundred and three thousand warriors, women, and children in the band. I galloped back to the command, distant about three miles, and reported the news to General Carr, who halted the regiment, and after consulting a few minutes, ordered me to select a ravine, or as low ground as possible, so that we could keep the troops out of sight until we could strike the creek.

"We went into camp on the Beaver, and the general ordered Lieutenant Ward to take twelve men and myself and follow up the trail for several miles, and find out how fast the Indians were travelling. I was soon convinced, by the many camps they had made, that they were travelling slowly, and hunting as they journeyed. We went down the Beaver on this scout about twelve miles, keeping our horses well concealed under the banks of the creek, so as not to be discovered.

"At this point Lieutenant Ward and myself, leaving our horses behind us, crawled to the top of a high knoll, where we could have a good view for some miles down the stream. We peeped over the summit of the hill, and, not over three miles away, we could see a whole Indian village in plain sight, and thousands of ponies grazing around on the prairie. Looking over to our left on the opposite side of the creek, we observed two or three parties of Indians coming in, loaded down with buffalo meat.

"'This is no place for us, Lieutenant,' said I; 'I think we have important business at the camp to attend to as soon as possible.'

"'I agree with you,' said he; 'and the quicker we get there the better it will be for us.'

"We quickly descended the hill and joined the men below. Lieutenant Ward quickly wrote a note to General Carr, and handing it to a corporal, ordered him to make all possible haste back to the command and deliver the message. The man started off on a gallop, and Lieutenant Ward said: 'We will march slowly back until we meet the troops, as I think the general will soon be here, for he will start immediately upon receiving my note.'

"In a few minutes we heard two or three shots in the direction in which our despatch courier had gone, and soon after we saw him come running around the bend of the creek, pursued by four or five Indians. The lieutenant, with his squad of soldiers and myself, at once charged among them, when they turned and ran across the stream.

"'This will not do,' said Lieutenant Ward, 'the whole Indian village will now know that soldiers are near by.'

"'Lieutenant, give me that note, and I will take it to the general,' said I.

"He gladly handed me the despatch, and spurring my horse I dashed up the creek. After having ridden a short distance, I observed another party of Indians also going to the village with meat; but instead of waiting for them to fire on me, I gave them a shot at long range. Seeing one man firing at them so boldly, it surprised them, and they did not know what to make of it. While they were thus considering, I got between them and our camp. By this time they had recovered from their surprise, and cutting their buffalo meat loose from their horses, they came after me at the top of their speed; but as their steeds were tired out, it did not take me long to leave them far in the rear.

"I reached the command in less than an hour, delivered the despatch to General Carr, and informed him of what I had seen. He instantly had the bugler sound 'boots and saddles,' and all the troops — with the exception of two companies which we left to guard the train — were soon galloping in the direction of the Indian camp.

"We had ridden about three miles when we met Lieutenant Ward, who was coming slowly toward us. He reported that he had run into a party of Indian buffalo-hunters, and had killed one of the number, and had had one of his horses wounded. We immediately pushed forward, and after marching about five miles came within sight of hundreds of mounted Indians advancing up the creek to meet us. They formed a complete line in front of us. General Carr, being desirous of striking their village, ordered the troops to charge, break through their line, and keep straight on. This movement would, no doubt, have been successfully accomplished had it not been for the rattle-brained and daredevil French Lieutenant Schinosky, commanding Company B, who, misunderstanding General Carr's orders, charged upon some Indians at the left, while the rest of the command dashed through the enemy's line, and was keeping straight on, when it was observed that Schinosky and his company were surrounded by four or five hundred redskins. The general, to save the company, was obliged to sound a halt, and charge back to the rescue. The company, during this short fight, had several men and quite a number of horses killed.

"All this took up valuable time, and night was coming on. The Indians were fighting desperately to keep us from reaching their village, which, being informed by couriers of what was taking place, was packing up and getting away. During that afternoon it was all that we could do to hold our own in fighting the mounted warriors, who were in our front, and contesting every inch of the ground. The general had left word for our wagon-train to follow up with its escort of two companies, but as it had not made its appearance he entertained some fears that it had been surrounded, and to prevent the loss of the supply-train we had to go back and look for it. About nine o'clock that evening we found it, and went into camp for the night.

"Early the next day we broke camp and passed down the creek, but there was not an Indian to be seen. They had all disappeared and gone with their village. Two miles farther we came to where a village had been located, and here we found nearly everything belonging or pertaining to an Indian camp, which had been left in the great hurry to get away. These articles were all gathered up and burned. We then pushed out on the trail as fast as possible. It led us to the northeast toward the Republican; but as the Indians had a night the start of us we entertained but little hope of overtaking them that day. Upon reaching the Republican in the afternoon the general called a halt, and as the trail was running more to the East, he concluded to send his wagon-train on to Fort McPherson by the most direct route, while he would follow on the trail of the redskins.

"Next morning at daylight we again pulled out, and were evidently gaining rapidly on the Indians, for we could occasionally see them in the distance. About eleven o'clock that day, while Major Babcock was ahead of the main command with his company, and while we were crossing a deep ravine, we were surprised by about three hundred warriors who commenced a lively fire upon us. Galloping out of the ravine on to the rough prairie the men dismounted and returned the fire. We soon succeeded in driving the enemy before us, and were so close upon them at one time that they abandoned, and threw away nearly all their lodges and camp equipage, and everything that had any considerable weight. They left behind them their played-out horses, and for miles we could see Indian furniture strewn along in every direction. The trail became divided, and the Indians scattered in small bodies, all over the prairie. As night was approaching, and our horses were about giving out, a halt was called. A company was detailed to collect all the Indian horses running loose over the country, and to burn the other Indian property.

"The command being nearly out of rations I was sent to the nearest point, old Fort Kearny, about sixty miles distant for supplies.

"Shortly after we reached Fort McPherson, which continued to be the headquarters of the Fifth Cavalry for some time, we fitted out a new expedition to the Republican River country, and were reënforced by three companies of the celebrated Pawnee Indian scouts, commanded by Major Frank North: his officers being Captain Lute North, brother of the major, Captain Cushing, his brother-in-law, Captain Morse, and Lieutenants Beecher, Matthews, and Kislandberry. General Carr recommended at this time to General Augur, who was in command of the Department, that I be made chief of scouts in the Department of the Platte, and informed me that in this position I would receive higher wages than I had been getting in the Department of the Missouri. This appointment I had not asked for.

"I made the acquaintance of Major Frank North, and I found him and his officers perfect gentlemen, and we were all good friends from the very start. The Pawnee scouts had made quite a reputation for themselves, as they had performed brave and valuable services in fighting against the Sioux, whose bitter enemies they were; being thoroughly acquainted with the Republican and Beaver country, I was glad that they were to be with the expedition, and my expectation of the aid they would render was not disappointed.

"During our stay at Fort McPherson I made the acquaintance of Lieutenant George P. Belden, known as 'The White Chief.' I found him to be an intelligent, dashing fellow, a splendid rider, and an excellent shot.

"While we were at this post, General Augur and several of his officers, and also Thomas Duncan, Brevet Brigadier and Lieutenant-Colonel of the Fifth Cavalry, paid us a visit for the purpose of reviewing the command. The regiment turned out in fine style and showed themselves to be well-drilled soldiers, thoroughly understanding military tactics. The Pawnee scouts were also reviewed and it was very amusing to see them in their full regulation uniform. They had been furnished a regular cavalry uniform and on this parade some of them had their heavy overcoats on, others their large black hats, with all the brass accoutrements attached; some of them were minus pantaloons and only wore a breech-clout. Others wore regulation pantaloons but no shirts, and were bareheaded; others again had the seat of their pantaloons cut out, leaving only leggings; some of them wore brass spurs, though without boots or moccasins; but for all this they seemed to understand the drill remarkably well for Indians. The commands, of course, were given to them in their own language by Major North, who could talk it as well as any full-blooded Pawnee. The Indians were well mounted and felt proud and elated because they had been made United States soldiers. Major North had for years complete power over these Indians and could do more with them than any man living. That evening after the parade was over the officers and quite a number of ladies visited a grand Indian dance given by the Pawnees, and of all the Indians I have ever seen, their dances excel those of any other tribe.

"Next day the command started; when encamped, several days after, on the Republican River near the mouth of the Beaver, we heard the whoops of the Indians, followed by shots in the vicinity of the mule herd, which had been taken down to water. One of the herders came dashing into camp with an arrow sticking into him. My horse was close at hand, and, mounting him bareback, I at once dashed off after the mule herd, which had been stampeded. I supposed that certainly I would be the first man on the ground, but I was mistaken, however, for the Pawnee Indians, unlike regular soldiers, had not waited to receive orders from their officers, but had jumped on their ponies without bridles or saddles, and placing ropes in their mouths, had dashed off in the direction whence the shots had come, and had got there ahead of me. It proved to be a party of about fifty Sioux, who had endeavoured to stampede our mules, and it took them by surprise to see their inveterate enemies — the Pawnees — coming at full gallop toward them. They were not aware that the Pawnees were with the command, and as they knew that it would take regular soldiers some time to turn out, they thought they would have ample opportunity to secure the herd before the troops could give chase.

"We had a running fight of fifteen miles and several of the enemy were killed. During this chase I was mounted on an excellent horse, which Colonel Royall had picked out for me, and for the first mile or two I was in advance of the Pawnees. Presently a Pawnee shot by me like an arrow and I could not help admiring the horse he was riding. Seeing that he possessed rare running qualities, I determined to get possession of the animal in some way. It was a large buckskin or yellow horse, and I took a careful view of him so that I would know him when I returned to camp. After the chase was over I rode up to Major North and inquired about the buckskin horse.

Cody on
Buckskin Joe.

"'Oh, yes,' said the major, 'that is one of our favourite steeds.'

"'What chance is there to trade for him?' I asked.

"'It is a government horse,' said he, 'and the Indian who is riding him is very much attached to him.'

"'I have fallen in love with the horse myself,' said I, 'and I would like to know if you have any objections to my trading for him if I can arrange it satisfactorily with the Indian?'

"He replied: 'None whatever, and I will help you to do it; you can give the Indian another horse in his place.'

"A few days after this, I persuaded the Indian, by making him several presents, to trade horses with me, and in this way I became the owner of the buckskin steed, not as my own property, however, but as a government horse that I could ride. I gave him the name of 'Buckskin Joe,' and he proved to be a good second Brigham. That horse I rode off and on during the summers of 1869, '70, '71, and '72, and he was the horse that the Grand Duke Alexis rode on his buffalo-hunt.

"The command scouted several days up the Beaver and Prairie Dog rivers, occasionally having running fights with war-parties of Indians, but did not succeed in getting them into a general battle. At the end of twenty days we found ourselves back on the Republican.

"Hitherto the Pawnees had not taken much interest in me, but while at this camp I gained their respect and admiration by showing them how I killed buffaloes. I had gone out in company with Major North and some of the officers, and saw them make a 'surround.' Twenty of the Pawnees circled a herd and succeeded in killing only thirty-two.

"While they were cutting up the animals another herd appeared in sight. The Indians were preparing to surround it, when I asked Major North to keep them back and let me show them what I could do. He accordingly informed the Indians of my wish, and they readily consented to let me have the opportunity. I had learned that Buckskin Joe was an excellent buffalo horse, and felt confident that I would astonish the natives; galloping in among the buffaloes, I certainly did so, by killing thirty-six in less than a half-mile run. At nearly every shot I killed a buffalo, stringing the animals out on the prairie, not over fifty feet apart. This manner of killing was greatly admired by the Indians, who called me a big chief, and from that time on I stood high in their estimation.

"On leaving camp, the command took a westward course up the Republican, and Major North with two companies of his Pawnees and two or three companies of cavalry, under the command of Colonel Royall, made a scout to the north of the river. Shortly after we had gone into camp, on the Black Tail Deer Fork, we observed a band of Indians coming over the prairie at full gallop, singing and yelling and waving their lances and long poles. At first we supposed them to be Sioux, and all was excitement for a few moments. We noticed, however, that our Pawnee Indians made no hostile demonstrations or preparations toward going out to fight them, but began swinging and yelling themselves. Captain Lute North stepped up to General Carr and said: —

"'General, those are our men who are coming, and they have had a fight. That is the way they act when they come back from a battle and have taken any scalps.'

"The Pawnees came into camp on the run. Captain North calling to one of them — a sergeant — soon found out that they had run across a party of Sioux who were following a large Indian trail. These Indians had evidently been in a fight, for two or three of them had been wounded, and they were conveying the injured persons on travois.[1] The Pawnees had 'jumped' them and killed three or four after a sharp fight, in which much ammunition was expended.

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[1] Long poles, one fastened on each side of a pony, the ends dragging on the ground far to the rear; on these the dead and wounded were carried. The Indians also move their camp equipage by this primitive means of transportation.

"Next morning the command, at an early hour, started out to take up this Indian trail which they followed for two days as rapidly as possible, it becoming evident from the many camp-fires which we passed that we were gaining on the Indians. Wherever they had encamped we found the print of a woman's shoe, and we concluded that they had with them some white captive. This made us all the more anxious to overtake them, and General Carr accordingly selected all his best horses, which could stand a hard run, and gave orders for the wagon-train to follow as fast as possible, while he pushed ahead on a forced march. At the same time I was ordered to pick out five or six of the best Pawnees, and go on in advance of the command, keeping ten or twelve miles ahead on the trail, so that when we overtook the Indians we could find out the location of their camp, and send word to the troops before they came in sight, thus affording ample time to arrange a plan for the capture of the village.

"After having gone about ten miles in advance of the regiment, we began to move very cautiously, as we were now evidently nearing the Indians. We looked carefully over the summits of the hills before exposing ourselves to plain view, and at last we discovered the village encamped in the sand-hills south of the South Platte River at Summit Springs. Here I left the Pawnee scouts to keep watch while I went back and informed General Carr that the Indians were in sight.

"The general at once ordered his men to tighten their saddles and otherwise prepare for action. Soon all was excitement among the officers and soldiers, every one being anxious to charge the village. I now changed my horse for old Buckskin Joe, who had been led for me thus far, and was comparatively fresh. Acting on my suggestion, the general made a circuit to the north, believing that if the Indians had their scouts out, they would naturally be watching in the direction whence they had come. When we had passed the Indians and were between them and the Platte River, we turned toward the left and started for the village.

"As we halted on the top of the hill overlooking the camp of the unsuspecting Indians, General Carr called out to his bugler: 'Sound the charge!' The bugler for a moment became intensely excited, and actually forgot the notes. The general again sang out: 'Sound the charge!' and yet the bugler was unable to obey the command. Quartermaster Hays, who had obtained permission to accompany the expedition, was riding near the general, and comprehending the dilemma of the man, rushed up to him, jerked the bugle from his hands, and sounded the charge himself in clear and distinct notes. As the troops rushed forward, he threw the bugle away, then, drawing his pistols, was among the first men that entered the village.

"The Indians had just driven up their horses and were preparing to make a move of the camp, when they saw the soldiers coming down upon them. A great many of them succeeded in jumping upon their ponies, and leaving everything behind them, advanced out of the village and prepared to meet the charge; but upon second thought they quickly concluded that it was useless to try to check us, and those who were mounted rapidly rode away, while the others on foot fled for safety to the neighbouring hills. We went through their village, shooting right and left at everything we saw. The Pawnees, the regular soldiers, and officers were all mixed up together, and the Sioux were flying in every direction.

"The pursuit continued until darkness made it impossible to longer follow the Indians, who had scattered and were heading off in every direction like a brood of young quails.

"It was nearly sunrise when 'boots and saddles' was sounded, breakfast having been disposed of at the first streak of dawn. The command started in a most seasonable time, but finding that the trail was all broken up, it was deemed advisable to separate into companies, each to follow a different one.

"The company which I headed struck out toward the northwest over a route indicating the march of about one hundred Indians, and we followed this for nearly two days. At a short bend of the Platte a new trail was discovered leading into the one the company was following, and at this point it was evident that a junction had been made. Farther along, evidences of a reunion of the entire village increased, and now it began to appear that farther pursuit would be somewhat hazardous, owing to the greater force of the Indians. But there were plenty of brave men in the company, and nearly all were anxious to meet the Indians, however great their numbers might be. This anxiety was appeased on the third day, when a party of about six hundred Sioux was discovered riding in close ranks near the Platte. The discovery was mutual, and there was immediate preparation for battle on both sides. Owing to the overwhelming force of the Indians, extreme caution became necessary, and instead of advancing boldly, the soldiers sought advantageous ground. Seeing this, the Indians became convinced that there had been a division of General Carr's command, and that the company before them was a fragmentary part of the expedition; they therefore assumed the aggressive, charging us until we were compelled to retire to a ravine and act on the defensive. The attack was made with such caution that the soldiers fell back without undue haste, and had ample opportunity to secure their horses in the natural pit, which was a ravine that during wet seasons formed a branch of the Platte.

"After circling about the soldiers with the view of measuring their full strength, the Indians, comprehending how small was the number, made a desperate charge from two sides, getting so near us that several of the soldiers were badly wounded by arrows. But the Indians were received with such a withering fire that they fell back in confusion, leaving twenty of their warriors on the ground. Another charge resulted like the first, with heavy loss to the redskins, which so discouraged them that they drew off and held a protracted council. After discussing the situation among themselves for more than an hour they separated, one body making off as though they intended to leave, but I understood too well to allow the soldiers to be deceived.

"The Indians who remained again began to ride in a circle around us, but maintained a safe distance, out of rifle range. Seeing an especially well-mounted Indian riding at the head of a squad, passing around in the same circle more than a dozen times, I decided to take my chances for dismounting the chief — as he proved to be — and to accomplish this purpose I crawled on my hands and knees three hundred yards up the ravine, stopping at a point which I considered would be in range of the Indian when he should again make the circuit. My judgment proved correct; for soon the Indian was seen loping his pony through the grass, and as he slackened speed to cross the ravine, I rose up and fired, the aim being so well taken that the chief tumbled to the ground, while his horse, after running a few hundred yards, approached the soldiers, one of whom ran out and caught hold of the long lariat attached to the bridle, and thus secured the animal. When I returned to the company, all of whom had witnessed my feat of killing an Indian at a range of fully four hundred yards, by general consent the horse of the victim was given to me.

"This Indian whom I killed proved to be Tall Bull, one of the most able chiefs the Sioux ever had; and his death so affected the Indians that they at once retreated without further attempt to dislodge us.

"Some days after this occurrence General Carr's command was brought together again, and had an engagement with the Sioux, in which more than three hundred warriors and a large number of ponies were captured, together with several hundred squaws, among the latter being Tall Bull's widow, who told with pathetic interest how the Prairie Chief[1] had killed her husband.

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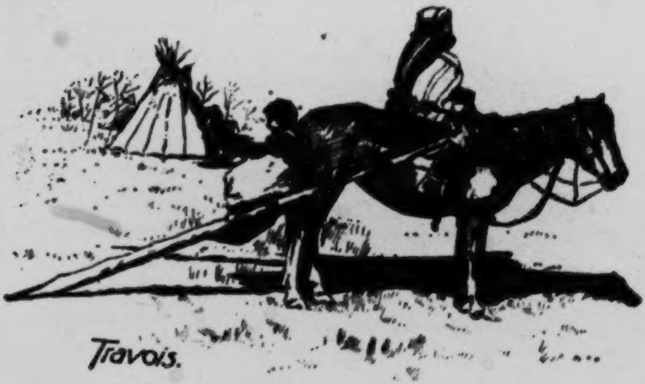
[1] Strange as it may seem, this savage, instead of being moved with hatred toward Colonel Cody, as a civilized woman would have been under similar circumstances, actually looked upon him with special favour and esteemed it quite an honour that her husband, a great warrior himself, should have met his death at the hands of such a brave man as the Prairie Chief, the name the Indians had given to the colonel.



Travois.

CHAPTER XVII

BUFFALO BILL'S ADVENTURES CONTINUED — HUNTING AT FORT McPHERSON — INDIANS STEAL HIS FAVOURITE PONY — THE CHASE — SCOUTING UNDER GENERAL DUNCAN — PAWNEE SENTRIES — A DESERTED SQUAW — A JOKE ON McCARTHY — SCOUTING FOR CAPTAIN MEINHOLD — TEXAS JACK — BUCKSKIN JOE — SITTING BULL AND THE INDIAN WAR OF 1876 — MASSACRE OF CUSTER AND HIS COMMAND — BUFFALO BILL TAKES THE FIRST SCALP FOR CUSTER — YELLOW HAND, SON OF CUT NOSE — CARRIES DESPATCHES FOR TERRY — GOOD-BY TO THE GENERAL

General G A Custer

I REMAINED at Fort Sedgwick during the winter, and early the following spring I returned to Fort McPherson, under orders to report to Major-General Emory of the Fifth Cavalry, who had been appointed commander of the District of the Republican, with headquarters at that post. As the command had been almost continuously in the field, it was generally thought that we were to have a long rest. During the fall of 1869 there were two or three scouting expeditions sent out, but nothing of very great importance was accomplished by them. There was plenty of game in the vicinity, and within a day's ride there were large herds of deer, antelope, and elk, which I spent a great deal of time in hunting.

"Early one morning in the spring of 1870 the Indians, who had approached the post during the night, stole twenty-one head of horses from a government contractor. They also ran off some of the government animals, and among the number my pony, Powder Face. Company I of the Fifth Cavalry was immediately ordered out after the savages, and I was directed to accompany them as trailer. We discovered their tracks after some difficulty, as the Indians were constantly trying to hide them, and we followed them sixty miles, when darkness set in.

"We were within about four miles of Red Willow Creek, and I felt confident the Indians would camp that night in the vicinity. Advising the commanding officer to halt his company and 'lay low,' I proceeded on to the creek, where, moving around cautiously, I suddenly discovered horses feeding in a bend of the stream on the opposite side. I hurried back to the troops with the information, and Lieutenant Thomas moved his company to the bank of the creek, with the intention of remaining there until daylight, and then, if possible, surprise the Indians.

"Just at break of day we mounted our horses, and after riding a short distance we ascended a slight elevation, when, not over one hundred yards distant, we looked down into the Indian camp. The Indians, preparing to make an early start, had driven up their horses and were in the act of mounting, when they saw us charging down upon them. In a moment they sprang upon their ponies and dashed away. Had it not been for the creek, which lay between us and them, we would have got them before they could have mounted their horses; but as it was rather miry, we were unexpectedly delayed. The Indians fired some shots at us while we were crossing, but as soon as we got over we went for them in hot pursuit. A few of the redskins, not having time to mount, had started on foot toward the brush. One of these was killed.

"A number of our soldiers, who had been detailed before the charge to gather up any of the Indian horses that might be stampeded, succeeded in capturing thirty-two. I hurriedly looked over them to see if Powder Face was there, but he was not. Starting in pursuit of the fugitives I finally espied an Indian mounted on my favourite, dashing away and leading all the others. We continued the chase for two or three miles, overtaking a couple of Indians who were mounted on one horse. Coming up behind them I fired my rifle, when they were about thirty feet away; the ball passed through the backs of both, and they fell headlong to the ground; but I made no stop, however, just then, for I had my eye on the savage who was riding Powder Face. It seemed to be fun for him to run away from us, and run away he did, for the last I saw of him he was going over a divide about three miles away. I bade him adieu. On my way back to the Indian camp I stopped and secured the war-bonnets and accoutrements of the pair I had killed, and at the same time gently raised their hair.

"We were feeling rather tired and hungry as we had started out on the trail thirty-six hours before without breakfast and taking no rations with us; but there was no murmur of complaint. In the abandoned camp, however, we had sufficient dried buffalo meat to give us all a meal, and, after remaining there for two hours to rest our animals, we commenced our return trip to Fort McPherson, where we arrived at night, having travelled one hundred and thirty miles in two days.

"This being the first fight Lieutenant Thomas had ever commanded in, he felt highly elated over his success, and hoped that his name would be mentioned in the special orders for gallantry; sure enough, when we returned both he, myself, and the whole command received complimentary mention in a special order. This he certainly deserved, for he was a brave, energetic, dashing little officer. The war-bonnets which I had captured I turned over to General Carr, with the request that he present them to General Augur, whose daughters were visiting at the post at the time.

"Shortly after this another expedition was organized at Fort McPherson for the Republican River country. It was commanded by General Duncan, who was a jolly, blustering old fellow, and the officers who knew him well said that we would have a good time, as he was very fond of hunting. He was a good fighter, and one of the officers said that an Indian bullet never could hurt him, as he had been shot in the head with a cannon-ball which had not injured him in the least, but had glanced off and killed one of the toughest mules in the army.

"The Pawnee scouts, who had been mustered out of service during the winter of 1869–1870, we reorganized to accompany this expedition. I was glad of this, as I had become quite attached to one of the officers, Major North, and to many of the Indians. The only white scout we had at the post, besides myself, at that time, was John Y. Nelson, whose Indian name was Sha-Cha-Cha-Opoyeo,[1] which interpreted means Red Willow fill the Pipe. This man is a character in his way; he has a Sioux squaw for a wife, and consequently a half-breed family.

"We started out from the post with the regimental band playing the lively air of 'The Girl I left behind Me.' We made but a short march that day, and camped at night at the head of Fox Creek. Next morning General Duncan sent me word by his orderly that I was to bring up my gun and shoot at a mark with him; but I can assure the reader that I did not feel much like shooting anything except myself, for on the previous night I had returned to Fort McPherson and spent several hours in interviewing the sutler's store in company with Major Brown. I looked around for my gun, and found that I had left it behind. The last that I could remember about it was that I had it at the sutler's store. I informed Major Brown of my loss, who said that I was a nice scout to start out without a gun. I replied that that was not the worst of it, as General Duncan had sent for me to shoot a match with him, and I did not know what to do; for if the old gentleman discovered my predicament, he would very likely severely reprimand me.

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[1] Nelson is still shooting Indians from the top of the old Deadwood stage-coach in the Wild West show.

"'Well, Cody,' said he, 'the best you can do is to make some excuse, and then go and borrow a gun from some of the men, and tell the general you lent yours to some man to go hunting with to-day. While we are waiting here, I will send back to the post and get your rifle for you.' I succeeded in obtaining a gun from John Nelson, and then, marching up to the general's headquarters, I shot the desired match, which resulted in his favour.

"This was the first scout the Pawnees had been on under the command of General Duncan, and in stationing his guards around the camp, he posted them in a manner entirely different from General Carr and Colonel Royall, as he insisted that the different posts should call out the hour of the night thus: —

"'Post No. 1, nine o'clock, all is well!' etc.

"The Pawnees, who had their regular turns at standing upon guard, were ordered to call the hour the same as the white soldiers. This was very difficult for them to do, as there were but few of them who could express themselves in English. Major North explained to them that when the man on post next to them should call out the hour, they must call it also, copying him as nearly as possible. It was very amusing to hear them do this. They would try to remember what the other man had said on the post next to them. For instance, a white soldier would call out, 'Post No. 1, half-past nine o'clock, all is well!' The Indian standing next to him knew that he was bound to say something in English, and he would sing out something like the following:—

"'Poss number half-pass five cents—go to——! I don't care!' This system was really so ridiculous and amusing that the general had to give it up, and the order was accordingly countermanded.

"Nothing of any great interest occurred on this march, until one day, while proceeding up Prairie Dog Creek, Major North and myself went out in advance of the command several miles and killed a number of buffaloes. Night was approaching, and I began to look around for a suitable camping-ground for the command. Major North dismounted from his horse and was resting, while I rode down the stream to see if there was plenty of grass in the vicinity. I found an excellent camping-spot, and, returning to Major North, told him that I would ride over the hill a little way, so that the advance guard could see me. This I did; and when the advance came in sight, I dismounted and lay down upon the grass to rest.

"Suddenly I heard three or four shots, and in a few moments Major North came dashing up toward me, pursued by eight or ten Indians. I instantly sprang into my saddle, and fired a few shots at the Indians, who by this time had all come in sight, to the number of fifty. We turned our horses and ran, the bullets flying after us thick and fast, my whip being shot from my hand and daylight being put through the crown of my hat. We were in close quarters, when suddenly Lieutenant Volkmar came galloping up to our relief with several soldiers; and the Indians, seeing them, whirled and retreated. As soon as Major North got in sight of his Pawnees he began riding in a circle. This was a sign to them that there were hostile Indians in front; and in a moment the Pawnees broke ranks pell-mell, and, with Major North at their head, started for the flying warriors. The rest of the command pushed forward, also, and chased the enemy for three or four miles, killing three of them.

"But this was a wrong move on our part, as their village was on Prairie Dog Creek, while they led us in a different direction; one Indian only kept straight on up the creek — a messenger to the village. Some of the command, who had followed him, stirred up the village and accelerated its departure. We finally got back to the main force, and then learned that we had made a great mistake. Now commenced another stern chase.

"The second day that we had been following these Indians we came upon an old squaw, whom they had left on the prairie to die. Her people had built for her a little shade or lodge, and had given her some provisions, sufficient to last her on her trip to the happy hunting-grounds. This the Indians often do when pursued by an enemy and one of their number becomes too old to travel any longer. This squaw was recognized by John Nelson, who said she was a relative of his wife. From her we learned that the flying Indians were known as Pawnee-Killer's band, and that they had lately killed Buck's surveying party, consisting of eight or nine men, the massacre having occurred a few days before on Beaver Creek. We knew that they had had a fight with the surveyors, as we found quite a number of surveying instruments, which had been left in the abandoned camp. We drove these Indians across the Platte River and then returned to Fort McPherson, bringing the old squaw with us; from there she was sent to the Spotted Tail agency.

"Fort McPherson was in the centre of a fine game country, in which buffalo were particularly plentiful, and though fairly surrounded by hostile Indians, it offered so many attractions for sportsmen that several hunting-parties braved the dangers for the pleasures of buffalo-chasing. In September, 1871, General Sheridan brought a number of friends out to the post for a grand hunt, coming by way of North Platte in a special car, and thence by government wagons to the fort, which was only eighteen miles from that station.

"Soon after the departure of General Sheridan's party, General Carr started out on a twenty days' scout, not so much for the purpose of fighting Indians, but more for the object of taking some friends on a hunt. His guests were a couple of Englishmen — whose names I cannot now remember — and Mr. McCarthy of New York, who was a relative of General Emory. The command consisted of three companies of the Fifth Cavalry, one company of Pawnee Indians, and twenty-five wagons. Of course I was called on to accompany the expedition.

"One day, after we had been out from the post for some little time, I was hunting on Deer Creek, in company with Mr. McCarthy, about eight miles from the command. I had been wishing for several days to play a joke on him, and had arranged a plan with Captain Lute North to carry it into execution. I had informed North at about what time we would be on Deer Creek, and it was agreed that he should appear in the vicinity with some of his Pawnees, who were to throw their blankets around them, and come dashing down upon us, firing and whooping in true Indian style, while he was either to conceal or disguise himself. This programme was faithfully and completely carried out. I had been talking about Indians to McCarthy, and he had become considerably excited, when just as we turned a bend of the creek, we saw not half a mile from us about twenty Indians, who instantly started for us on a gallop, firing their guns and yelling at the top of their voices.

"'McCarthy, shall we dismount and fight, or run?' said I.

"He didn't wait to reply, but, wheeling his horse, started at full speed down the creek, losing his hat and dropping his gun; away he went, never once looking back to see if he was being pursued. I tried to stop him by yelling at him and saying that it was all right, as the Indians were Pawnees. Unfortunately he did not hear me, but kept straight on, not stopping his horse until he reached the camp.

"I knew that he would tell General Carr that the Indians had jumped him, and that the general would soon start out with the troops. So as soon as the Pawnees rode up to me I told them to remain there while I went after my friend. I rode after him as fast as possible, but he had arrived at the command some time before me; and when I got there the general had, as I had suspected he would do, ordered out two companies of cavalry to go in pursuit of the Indians. I told the general that the Indians were only some Pawnees, who had been out hunting and that they had merely played a joke upon us. I forgot to inform him that I had put up the trick, but as he was always fond of a good joke himself, he did not get very angry. I had picked up McCarthy's hat and gun, which I returned to him, and it was some time before he discovered who was at the bottom of the affair.

"A short time after this, the Fifth Cavalry was ordered to Arizona, a not very desirable country to soldier in. I had become greatly attached to the officers of the regiment, having been with them continually for over three years, and had about made up my mind to accompany them, when a letter was received from General Sheridan instructing the commanding officer 'not to take Cody with him,' and saying that I was to remain in my old position. In a few days the command left for its destination, taking the cars at McPherson Station, where I bade my old friends adieu. During the next few weeks I had but little to do, as the post was garrisoned by infantry, awaiting the arrival of the Third Cavalry, commanded by General Reynolds. They had been on duty for some time in Arizona, where they had acquired quite a reputation on account of their Indian fighting qualities. Shortly after their arrival a small party of Indians made a dash on McPherson Station, about five miles from the fort, killing two or three men and running off quite a large number of horses. Captain Meinhold and Lieutenant Lawson with their company were ordered out to pursue and punish the Indians if possible. I was the guide of the expedition, and had an assistant, T. B. Omohundro, better known as 'Texas Jack,' and who was a scout at the post.

"Finding the trail I followed it for two days, although it was difficult trailing because the redskins had taken every possible precaution to conceal their tracks. On the second day Captain Meinhold went into camp on the South Fork of the Loupe, at a point where the trail was badly scattered. Six men were detailed to accompany me on a scout in search of the camp of fugitives. We had gone but a short distance when we discovered Indians camped, not more than a mile away, with horses grazing near by. They were only a small party, and I determined to charge upon them with my six men, rather than return to the command, because I feared they would see us as we went back, and then they would get away from us entirely. I asked the men if they were willing to attempt it, and they replied that they would follow me wherever I would lead them. That was the kind of spirit that pleased me; and we immediately moved forward on the enemy, getting as close to them as possible without being seen.

"I finally gave the signal to charge, and we dashed into the little camp with a yell. Five Indians sprang out of a willow teepee, and greeted us with a volley, and we returned the fire. I was riding Buckskin Joe, who with a few jumps brought me up to the teepee, followed by my men. We nearly ran over the Indians, who were endeavouring to reach their horses on the opposite side of the creek. Just as one was jumping the narrow stream a bullet from my old 'Lucretia' overtook him. He never reached the other bank, but dropped dead in the water. Those of the Indians who were guarding the horses, seeing what was going on at the camp, came rushing to the rescue of their friends. I now counted thirteen braves, but as we had already disposed of two, we had only eleven to take care of. The odds were nearly two to one against us.

"While the Indian reënforcements were approaching the camp I jumped the creek with Buckskin Joe, to meet them, expecting our party would follow me; but as they could not induce their horses to make the leap, I was the only one who got over. I ordered the sergeant to dismount his men, leaving one to hold the horses, and come over with the rest and help me drive the Indians off. Before they could do this, two mounted warriors closed in on me and were shooting at short range. I returned their fire and had the satisfaction of seeing one of them fall from his horse. At this moment I felt blood trickling down my forehead, and hastily running my hand through my hair I discovered that I had received a scalp-wound. The Indian who had shot me was not more than ten yards away, and when he saw his partner tumble from his saddle he turned to run.

By this time the soldiers had crossed the creek to assist me, and were blazing away at the other Indians. Urging Buckskin Joe forward, I was soon alongside of the chap who had wounded me, when, raising myself in the stirrups, I shot him through the head.

"The reports of our guns had been heard by Captain Meinhold, who at once started with his company up the creek to our aid, and when the remaining Indians, whom we were still fighting, saw these reënforcements coming, they whirled their horses and fled; as their steeds were quite fresh they made their escape. However, we killed six out of the thirteen Indians, and captured most of their stolen stock. Our loss was one man killed, and another — myself — slightly wounded. One of our horses was killed, and Buckskin Joe was wounded, but I didn't discover the fact until some time afterward, as he had been shot in the breast and showed no signs of having received a scratch of any kind. Securing the scalps of the dead Indians and other trophies we returned to the fort.

"I made several other scouts during the summer with different officers of the Third Cavalry, one being with Major Aleck Moore, a good officer, with whom I was out for thirty days. Another long one was with Major Curtis, with whom I followed some Indians from the South Platte River to Fort Randall on the Missouri River, in Dakota, on which trip the command ran out of rations and for fifteen days subsisted entirely upon the game we killed.

"In 1876 the great Sioux war was inaugurated. Colonel Mills had written me several letters saying that General Crook was anxious for me to accompany his command, and I promised to do so, intending to overtake him in the Powder River country. But when I arrived at Chicago, on my way West, I learned that my old regiment, the gallant Fifth Cavalry, was on its way back from Arizona to join General Crook, and that my old commander, General Carr, was in command. He had written to military headquarters at Chicago to learn my whereabouts, as he wished to secure me as his guide and chief of scouts. I then gave up the idea of overtaking General Crook, and hastened on to Cheyenne, where the Fifth Cavalry had already arrived. I was met at the depot by Lieutenant King, adjutant of the regiment, who had been sent down from Fort D. A. Russell for that purpose by General Carr, who had learned by a telegram from military headquarters at Chicago that I was on the way. I accompanied the lieutenant on horseback to the camp, and as we rode, one of the boys shouted, 'Here's Buffalo Bill!' Soon after there came three hearty cheers from the regiment. Officers and men were all glad to see me, and I was equally delighted to meet them once more. The general at once appointed me his guide and chief of scouts.

"The next morning the command pulled out for Fort Laramie, and on reaching the post we found General Sheridan there, accompanied by General Frye and General Forsythe, en route to Red Cloud agency. As the command was to remain here a few days, I accompanied General Sheridan to Red Cloud and back, taking a company of cavalry as escort.

"The Indians having committed a great many depredations on the Union Pacific Railroad, destroying telegraph lines, and also on the Black Hills road, running off stock, the Fifth Cavalry was sent out to scout the country between the Indian agencies and the hills. The command operated on the South Fork of the Cheyenne and at the foot of the Black Hills for about two weeks, having several engagements with roving bands of Indians during the time. General Wesley Merritt—who had at that time but lately received his promotion to the colonelcy of the Fifth Cavalry—now came out and took control of the regiment. I was sorry that the command was taken from General Carr, because under him it had made its fighting reputation. However, upon becoming acquainted with General Merritt, I found him to be an excellent officer.

"The regiment, by continued scouting, soon drove the Indians out of that section of the country, as we supposed, and we had started on our way back to Fort Laramie, when a scout arrived at the camp, and reported the massacre of General Custer and his band of heroes on the Little Big Horn, on the 25th of June, 1876. He also brought orders to General Merritt to proceed at once to Fort Fetterman and join General Crook in the Big Horn country.

"The extraordinary and sorrowful interest attaching to the destruction of Custer and his brave followers prompts me to give a brief description of the causes leading thereto, and some of the details of that horrible sacrifice which so melts the heart to pity.

"When the Black Hills gold fever first broke out in 1874, a rush of miners into that country resulted in much trouble, as the Indians always regarded the region with jealous interest, and resisted all encroachments of white men. Instead of the government adhering to the treaty of 1868 and restraining white men from going into the Hills, General Custer was sent out, in 1874, to intimidate the Sioux. The unrighteous spirit of this order the general wisely disregarded, but proceeded to Prospect Valley, and from there he pushed into the Valley of the Little Missouri. Custer expected to find good grazing ground in this valley, suitable for a camp which he intended to pitch there for several days, and reconnoitre. The country, however, was comparatively barren, and the march was therefore continued to the Belle Fourche Valley, where excellent grazing, water, and plenty of wood was found.

"Crossing the Fourche the regiment was now among the outlying ranges of the Hills, where a camp was made and some reconnoitring done; but, finding no Indians, General Custer continued his march, skirting the Black Hills and passing through a country which he described as beautiful beyond description, abounding with a most luxurious vegetation, cool crystal streams, a profusion of bright, sweet-smelling flowers, and plenty of game.

"Proceeding down this lovely valley, which he appropriately named Floral Park, an Indian camp-fire, recently abandoned, was discovered, and fearing a collision unless pains were taken to prevent it, Custer halted and sent out his chief scout, Bloody Knife, with twenty friendly Indian allies, to trail the departed Sioux. They had gone but a short distance when, as Custer himself relates, 'Two of Bloody Knife's young men came galloping back and informed me that they had discovered five Indian lodges a few miles down the valley, and that Bloody Knife, as directed, had concealed his party in a wooded ravine, where they awaited further orders. Taking Company E with me, which was afterward reënforced by the remainder of the scouts and Colonel Hart's company, I proceeded to the ravine where Bloody Knife and his party lay concealed, and from the crest beyond obtained a full view of the five Indian lodges, about which a considerable number of ponies were grazing. I was enabled to place my command still nearer to the lodges undiscovered. I then despatched Agard, the interpreter, with a flag of truce, accompanied by ten of our Sioux scouts, to acquaint the occupants of the lodges that we were friendly disposed and desired to communicate with them.

To prevent either treachery or flight on their part, I galloped the remaining portion of my advance and surrounded the lodges. This was accomplished almost before they were aware of our presence. I then entered the little village and shook hands with its occupants, assuring them through the interpreter that they had no cause to fear, as we were not there to molest them, etc.'

"Finding there was no disposition on the part of General Custer to harm them, the Indians despatched a courier to their principal village, requesting the warriors to be present at a council with the whites. This council was held on the following day, but though Custer dispensed coffee, sugar, bacon, and other presents to the Indians, his advice to them regarding the occupation of their country by miners was treated with indifference, for which, he observes in his official report, 'I cannot blame the poor savages.'

"During the summer of 1875 General Crook made several trips into the Black Hills to drive out the miners and maintain the government's faith, but while he made many arrests there was no punishment, and the whole proceeding became farcical. In August of the same year Custer City was laid out, and two weeks later it contained a population of six hundred souls. These General Crook drove out, but as he marched from the place others swarmed in and the population was immediately renewed.

"It was this inability, or real indisposition, of the government to enforce the terms of the treaty of 1868, that led to the bitter war with Sitting Bull, and which terminated so disastrously on the 25th of June, 1876.

"It is a notorious fact that the Sioux Indians, for four years immediately preceding the Custer massacre, were regularly supplied with the most improved fire-arms and ammunition by the agencies at Brûlé, Grand River, Standing Rock, Port Berthold, Cheyenne, and Fort Peck. Even during the campaign of 1876, in the months of May, June, and July, just before and after Custer and his band of heroes rode down into the valley of death, these fighting Indians received eleven hundred and twenty Remington and Winchester rifles and four hundred and thirteen thousand rounds of patent ammunition, besides large quantities of loose powder, lead, and primers, while during the summer of 1875 they received several thousand stands of arms and more than a million rounds of ammunition. With this generous provision there is no cause for wonder that the Sioux were able to resist the government and attract to their aid all the dissatisfied Cheyennes and other Indians in the Northwest.

Sitting Bull

"Besides a perfect fighting equipment, all the Indians recognized in Sitting Bull the elements of a great warrior, one whose superior, perhaps, has never been known among the tribe; he combined all the strategic cunning of Tecumseh with the cruel, uncompromising hatred of Black Kettle, while his leadership was far superior to both. Having decided to precipitate a terrible war, he chose his position with consummate judgment, selecting a central vantage point surrounded by what is known as the 'Bad Lands,' and then kept his supply source open by an assumed friendship with the Canadian French.

This he was the better able to accomplish, since some years before he had professed conversion to Christianity under the preaching of Father Desmet and maintained a show of friendship for the Canadians.

"War against the Sioux having been brought about by the combined Black Hill outrages and Sitting Bull's threatening attitude, it was decided to send out three separate expeditions, one of which should move from the north, under General Terry, from Fort Lincoln; another from the east, under General Gibbon, from Fort Ellis, and another from the south, under General Crook, from Fort Fetterman; these movements were to be simultaneous, and a junction was expected to be formed near the headwaters of the Yellowstone River.

"For some cause, which I will refrain from discussing, the commands did not start at the same time. General Crook did not leave Fetterman until March 1, with seven hundred men and forty days' supply. The command was entrusted to Colonel Reynolds of the Third Cavalry, accompanied by General Crook, the department commander. Nothing was heard from this expedition until the 22d following, when General Crook forwarded from Fort Reno a brief account of his battle on Powder River. The result of this fight, which lasted five hours, was the destruction of Crazy Horse's village of one hundred and five lodges; or that is the way the despatch read, though many assert that the battle resulted in little else than a series of remarkable blunders which suffered the Indians to make good their escape, losing only a small quantity of their property.

"One serious trouble rose out of the Powder River fight, which was found in an assertion made by General Crook, or at least attributed to him, that his expedition had proved that instead of being fifteen or twenty thousand hostile Indians in the Black hills and Big Horn country, the total number would not exceed two thousand. It was upon this estimation that the expeditions were prepared.

"The Terry column, which was commanded by General Custer, consisted of twelve companies of the Seventh Cavalry, and three companies of the Sixth and Seventeenth Infantry, with four Gatling guns, and a detachment of Indian scouts. This force comprised twenty-eight officers and seven hundred and forty-seven men of the Seventh Cavalry, eight officers and one hundred and thirty-five men of the Sixth and Seventeenth Infantry, two officers and thirty-two men in charge of the Gatling battery, and forty-five enlisted Indian scouts, a grand total of thirty-eight officers and nine hundred and fifty-nine men, including scouts.

"The combined forces of Crook, Gibbon, Terry, and Custer did not exceed twenty-seven hundred men, while opposed to them were fully seventeen thousand Indians, all of whom were provided with the latest and most improved patterns of repeating rifles.

"On the 16th of June General Crook started for the Rosebud, on which stream it was reported that Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse were stationed; about the same time a party of Crow Indians who were operating with General Crook returned from a scout and reported that General Gibbon, who was on Tongue River, had been attacked by Sitting Bull, who had captured several horses. Crook pushed on rapidly toward the Rosebud, leaving his train behind and mounting his infantry on mules. What were deemed accurate reports stated that Sitting Bull was still on the Rosebud, only sixty miles from the point where General Crook camped on the night of the 15th of June. The command travelled forty miles on the 16th, and when within twenty miles of the Sioux' principal position, instead of pushing on, General Crook went into camp.

"The next morning he was much surprised to find himself attacked by Sitting Bull, who swooped down upon him with the first streaks of coming dawn, and a heavy battle followed. General Crook, who had camped in a basin surrounded on all sides by high hills, soon found his position so dangerous that it must be changed at all hazards. The advance was at once with Noyes' battalion occupying a position on the right, Mills on the right centre, Chambers in the centre, and the Indian allies on the left. Mills and Noyes charged the enemy in magnificent style, breaking the line and striking the rear. The fight continued hot and furious until two o'clock in the afternoon, when a gallant charge of Colonel Royall, who was in reserve, supported by the Indian allies, caused the Sioux to draw off to their village, six miles distant, while General Crook went into camp, where he remained inactive for two days.

"In the meantime, as the official report recites: 'Generals Terry and Gibbon communicated with each other June 1, near the junction of the Tongue and Yellowstone rivers, and learned that a heavy force of Indians had concentrated on the opposite bank of the Yellowstone, but eighteen miles distant. For fourteen days the Indian pickets had confronted Gibbon's videttes.'

"General Gibbon reported to General Terry that the cavalry had thoroughly scouted the Yellowstone as far as the mouth of the Big Horn, and no Indians had crossed it. It was now certain that they were not prepared for them, and on the Powder, Tongue, Rosebud, Little Big Horn, and Big Horn rivers, General Terry at once commenced feeling for them. Major Reno of the Seventh Cavalry, with six companies of that regiment, was sent up Powder River one hundred and fifty miles, to the mouth of Little Powder River, to look for the Indians, and if possible to communicate with General Crook. He reached the mouth of the Little Powder in five days, but saw no Indians, and could hear nothing of Crook. As he returned, he found on the Rosebud a very large Indian trail about nine days old, and followed it a short distance, when he turned about up Tongue River, and reported to General Terry what he had seen. It was now known that no Indians were on either Tongue or Little Powder rivers, and the net had narrowed down to Rosebud, Little Big Horn, and Big Horn rivers.

"General Terry had been waiting with Custer and the steamer *Far West* at the mouth of Tongue River, for Reno's report, and as soon as he heard it he ordered Custer to march up the south bank to a point opposite General Gibbon, who was encamped on the north bank of the Yellowstone. Accordingly Terry, on board the steamer *Far West*, pushed up the Yellowstone, keeping abreast of General Custer's column.

"General Gibbon was found in camp quietly awaiting developments. A consultation was had with Generals Gibbon and Custer, and then General Terry definitely fixed upon the plan of action. It was believed that the Indians were at the head of the Rosebud, or over on the Little Big Horn, a dividing ridge only fifteen miles wide and separating the two streams. It was announced by General Terry that General Custer's column would strike the blow.

"At the time that a junction was formed between Gibbon and Terry, General Crook was about one hundred miles from them, while Sitting Bull's forces were between the commands. After his battle Crook fell back to the head of Tongue River. The Powder, Tongue, Rosebud, and Big Horn rivers all flow northwest, and empty into the Yellowstone; as Sitting Bull was between the headwaters of the Rosebud and Big Horn, the main tributary of the latter being known as the Little Big Horn, a sufficient knowledge of the topography of the country is thus afforded by which to definitely locate Sitting Bull and his forces.

"Having now ascertained the position of the enemy, or reasoned out the probable position, General Terry sent a despatch to General Sheridan, as follows: 'No Indians have been met with as yet, but traces of a large and recent camp have been discovered twenty or thirty miles up the Rosebud. Gibbon's column will move this morning on the north side of the Yellowstone, for the mouth of the Big Horn, where it will be ferried across by the supply steamer, and whence it will proceed to the mouth of the Little Big Horn, and so on. Custer will go to the Rosebud to-morrow with his whole regiment, and thence to the headwaters of the Little Big Horn, thence down that stream.'

"Following this report came an order, signed by E. W. Smith, Captain of the Eighteenth Infantry, Acting Assistant Adjutant-General, directing General Custer to follow the Indian trail discovered, pushing the Indians from one side, while General Gibbon pursued them from an opposite direction. As no instructions were given as to the rate at which each division should travel, Custer, noted for his quick, energetic movements, made ninety miles the first three days, and, discovering the Indians in large numbers, divided his command into three divisions, one of which he placed under Major Reno, another under Major Benteen, and led the other himself.

"As Custer made a detour to enter the village, Reno struck a large body of Indians, who, after retreating nearly three miles, turned on the troops and ran them pell-mell across Grassy Creek into the woods. Reno overestimated the strength of his enemies and thought he was being surrounded. Benteen came up to the support of Reno, but he too took fright and got out of his position without striking the enemy.

"While Reno and Benteen were trying to keep open a way for their retreat, Custer charged on the village, first sending a courier, Trumpeter Martin, to Reno and Benteen with the following despatch: 'Big village; be quick; send on the packs.' This order was too plain to be misunderstood. It clearly meant that he had discovered the village, which he intended attacking at once; to hurry forward to his support and bring up the packs, ambulances, etc. But, instead of obeying orders, Reno and Benteen stood aloof, fearful lest they should endanger their position, while the brave Custer and his squad of noble horses rushed down like a terrible avalanche upon the Indian village. In a moment, fateful incident, the Indians came swarming about that heroic band until the very earth seemed to open and let loose the elements of volcanic fury, or like a riot of the fiends of Erebus, blazing with the hot sulphur of their impious dominion. Down from the hillside, up through the valleys, that dreadful torrent of Indian cruelty and massacre poured around the little squad to swallow it up with one grand swoop of fire. But Custer was there at the head, like Spartacus fighting the legions about him, tall, graceful, brave as a lion at bay, and with thunderbolts in his hands. His brave followers formed a hollow square, and met the rush and roar and fury of the demons. Bravely they breasted that battle shock, bravely stood up and faced the leaden hail, nor quailed when looking into the blazing muzzles of five thousand deadly rifles.

"Brushing away the powder grimes that had settled in his face, Custer looked over the boiling sea of fury around him, peering through the smoke for some signs of Reno and Benteen, but seeing none. Still thinking of the aid which must soon come, with cheering words to his men he renewed the battle, fighting still like a Hercules and piling heaps of victims around his very feet.

"Hour after hour passed, and yet no friendly sign of Reno's coming; nothing to be seen through the battle-smoke, except streaks of fire splitting through the misty clouds, blood flowing in rivulets under tramping feet, dying comrades, and Indians swarming around him, rending the air with their demoniacal 'hi-yi-yip-yah! — yah-hi-yah!'

"The fight continued with unabated fury until late in the afternoon; men had sunk down beside their gallant leader until there was but a handful left, only a dozen, bleeding from many wounds and hot carbines in their stiffening hands. — The day is almost done, when look! Heaven now defend him! The charm of his life is broken, for Custer has fallen; a bullet cleaves a pathway through his side, and as he falters another strikes his noble breast. Like a strong oak stricken by the lightning's bolt, shivering the mighty trunk and bending its withering branches down close to the earth, so fell Custer; but, like the reacting branches, he rises partly up again, and striking out like a fatally wounded giant he lays three more Indians dead and breaks his mighty sword on the musket of a fourth; then, with useless blade and empty pistol, falls back the victim of a dozen wounds. — He was the last to succumb to death, and died, too, with the glory of accomplished duty on his conscience and the benediction of a grateful country on his head. The place where fell these noblest of heroes is sacred ground, and though it be the Golgotha of a nation's mistakes, it is bathed with precious blood, rich with the gems of heroic inheritance.

"I have avoided attaching blame to any one, using only the facts that have been furnished me to show how Custer came to attack the Sioux village and how and why he died.

"When the news of the terrible massacre was learned, soldiers everywhere made a pilgrimage to the sacred place, and friendly hands reared a monument on that distant spot commemorative of the heroism of Custer and his men. They collected together all the bones and relics of the battle and piled them up in pyramidal form, where they stand in sunshine and storm, overlooking the Little Big Horn.

"Soon after the news of Custer's massacre reached us, preparations were immediately made to avenge his death. The whole Cheyenne and Sioux tribes were in revolt, and a lively, if not very dangerous, campaign was inevitable.

"Two days before receipt of the news of the massacre, Colonel Stanton, who was with the Fifth Cavalry, had been sent to Red Cloud agency, and on the evening of the receipt of the news of the Custer fight a scout arrived in our camp with a message from the colonel informing General Merritt that eight hundred Cheyenne warriors had that day left Red Cloud agency to join Sitting Bull's hostile forces in the Big Horn country.

"Notwithstanding the instructions to proceed immediately to join General Crook by the way of Fort Fetterman, General Merritt took the responsibility of endeavouring to intercept the Cheyennes, and as the sequel shows he performed a very important service.

"He selected five hundred men and horses, and in two hours we were making a forced march back to Hat, or War Bonnet Creek — the intention being to reach the main Indian trail running to the north across that creek before the Cheyennes could get there. We arrived there the next night, and at daylight the following morning, July 17, 1876, I went out on a scout, and found that the Indians had not yet crossed the creek. On my way back to the command I discovered a large party of Indians, which proved to be the Cheyennes, coming up from the south, and I hurried to the camp with this important information.

"The cavalrymen quietly mounted their horses, and were ordered to remain out of sight, while General Merritt, accompanied by two or three aids and myself, went out on a tour of observation to a neighbouring hill, from the summit of which we saw that the Indians were approaching almost directly toward us. Presently fifteen or twenty of them dashed off to the west in the direction from which we had come the night before; and, upon closer observation with our field-glasses, we discovered two mounted soldiers, evidently carrying despatches for us, pushing forward on our trail.

"The Indians were evidently endeavouring to intercept these two men, and General Merritt feared that they would accomplish their object. He did not think it advisable to send out any soldiers to the assistance of the couriers, for fear they would show to the Indians that there were troops in the vicinity who were waiting for them. I finally suggested that the best plan was to wait until the couriers came closer to the command, and then, just as the Indians were about to make a charge, to let me take the scouts and cut them off from the main body of the Cheyennes, who were coming over the divide.

"'All right, Cody,' said the general, 'if you can do that, go ahead.'

"I rushed back to the command, jumped on my horse, picked out fifteen men, and returned with them to the point of observation. I told General Merritt to give us the word to start out at the proper time, and presently he sang out:—

"'Go in now, Cody, and be quick about it. They are going to charge on the couriers.'

"The two messengers were not over four hundred yards from us, and the Indians were only about two hundred yards behind them. We instantly dashed over the bluffs, and advanced on a gallop toward them. A running fight lasted several minutes, during which we drove the enemy some little distance and killed three of their number. The rest of them rode off toward the main body, which had come into plain sight and halted upon seeing the skirmish that was going on. We were about half a mile from General Merritt, and the Indians whom we were chasing suddenly turned upon us, and another lively skirmish took place. One of the Indians, who was handsomely decorated with all the ornaments usually worn by a war-chief when engaged in a fight, sang out to me, in his own tongue: 'I know you, Pa-he-haska; if you want to fight, come ahead and fight me.'

"The chief was riding his horse back and forth in front of his men, as if to banter me, and I concluded to accept the challenge. I galloped toward him for fifty yards and he advanced toward me about the same distance, both of us riding at full speed, and then, when we were only about thirty yards apart, I raised my rifle and fired; his horse fell to the ground, having been killed by my bullet. Almost at the same instant my own horse went down, he having stepped into a gopher-hole. The fall did not hurt me much, and I instantly sprang to my feet. The Indian had also recovered himself, and we were now both on foot, and not more than twenty paces apart. We fired at each other simultaneously. My usual luck did not desert me on this occasion, for his bullet missed me, while mine struck him in the breast. He reeled and fell, but before he had fairly touched the ground I was upon him, knife in hand, and had driven the keen-edged weapon to its hilt in his heart. Jerking his war-bonnet off, I scientifically scalped him in about five seconds.

"The whole affair from beginning to end occupied but little time, and the Indians, seeing that I was some little distance from my company, now came charging down upon me from a hill, in hopes of cutting me off. General Merritt had witnessed the duel, and realizing the danger I was in ordered Colonel Mason with Company K to hurry to my rescue. The order came none too soon, for if it had been one minute later I would have had not less than two hundred Indians upon me. As the soldiers came up I swung the Indian chieftain's top-knot and bonnet in the air, and shouted: —

"'The first scalp for Custer!'

"General Merritt, seeing that he could not now ambush the Indians, ordered the whole regiment to charge upon them. They made a stubborn resistance for a little while, but it was no use for any eight hundred, or even sixteen hundred, Indians to try to check a charge of the gallant old Fifth Cavalry. They soon came to that conclusion and began a running retreat toward Red Cloud agency. For thirty-five miles we drove them, pushing them so hard that they were obliged to abandon their loose horses, their camp equipage, and everything else. We drove them into the agency, and followed in ourselves, notwithstanding the possibility of our having to encounter the thousands of Indians at that point. We were uncertain whether or not the other agency Indians had determined to follow the example of the Cheyennes and strike out upon the war-path; but that made no difference with the Fifth Cavalry, for they would have fought them all if necessary. It was dark when we rode into the agency, where we found thousands of Indians collected together; but they manifested no disposition to fight.

"While at the agency I learned the name of the Indian chief whom I had killed that morning; it was Yellow Hand, a son of old Cut Nose — a leading chief of the Cheyennes. Cut Nose, having learned that I had killed his son, sent a white interpreter to me with a message to the effect that he would give me four mules if I would turn over to him Yellow Hand's war-bonnet, guns, pistols, ornaments, and other paraphernalia which I had captured. I sent back word to the old gentleman that it would give me pleasure to accommodate him, but I could not do it this time.

"The next morning we started to join General Crook, who was camped near the foot of Cloud Peak in the Big Horn Mountains, awaiting the arrival of the Fifth Cavalry before proceeding against the Sioux, who were somewhere near the head of the Little Big Horn — as his scouts informed him. We made rapid marches and reached General Crook's camp on Goose Creek about the 3d of August.

"At this camp I met many an old friend, among whom was Colonel Royall, who had received his promotion to the lieutenant-colonelcy of the Third Cavalry. He introduced me to general Crook, whom I had never met before, but of whom I had often heard. He also introduced me to the General's chief guide, Frank Grouard, a half-breed, who had lived six years with Sitting Bull, and knew the country thoroughly.

"We remained in this camp only one day, and then the whole troop pulled out for the Tongue River, leaving our wagons behind, but taking with us a large pack-train. We marched down the Tongue River for two days, thence in a westerly direction over the Rosebud, where we struck the main Indian trail, leading down this stream. From the size of the trail, which appeared to be about three or four days old, we estimated that there must have been in the neighbourhood of seven thousand Indians in the war-party.

"We pushed on, but we did not seem to gain much on the Indians, as they were evidently making about the same marches that we were.

"Soon the two commands were nearly out of supplies, so the trail was abandoned. The troops kept on down

Powder River to its confluence with the Yellowstone, and remained there several days. Here we met General Miles, who reported that no Indians had as yet crossed the Yellowstone. Several steamboats soon arrived with a large quantity of supplies, and once more the 'Boys in Blue' were made happy.

"One evening while we were in camp on the Yellowstone at the mouth of Powder River, I was informed that the commanding officers had selected Louis Richard, a half-breed, and myself, to accompany General Miles on a scouting expedition on the steamer *Far West*, down the Yellowstone as far as Glendive Creek.

"The *Far West* was to remain at Glendive overnight, and General Miles wished to send despatches back to General Terry at once. At his request I took the despatches and rode seventy-five miles that night through the Bad Lands of the Yellowstone, and reached General Terry's camp next morning, after having nearly broken my neck a dozen times or more.

"There being but little prospect of any more fighting, I determined to go East as soon as possible. So I started down the river on the steamer *Yellowstone* en route to Fort Beauford. On the same morning Generals Terry and Crook pulled out for Powder River, to take up the old Indian trail which we had recently left.

"The steamer had proceeded down the stream about twenty miles when it was met by another boat on its way up the river, having on board General Whistler and some fresh troops for General Terry's command. Both boats landed, and almost the first person I met was my old friend and partner, Texas Jack, who had been sent out as a despatch carrier for the *New York Herald*.

"General Whistler, upon learning that General Terry had left the Yellowstone, asked me to carry him some important despatches from General Sheridan, and although

I objected, he insisted on my performing this duty, saying that it would only detain me a few hours longer; as an extra inducement, he offered me the use of his own thoroughbred horse, which was on the boat. I finally consented to go, and was soon speeding over the rough and hilly country toward Powder River, and I delivered the despatches to General Terry the same evening. General Whistler's horse, though a good animal, was not used to such hard riding, and was far more exhausted by the journey than I was.

"After I had taken a lunch, General Terry asked me if I would carry some despatches back to General Whistler, and I replied that I would. Captain Smith, General Terry's aide-de-camp, offered me his horse for the trip, and it proved to be an excellent animal; for I rode him that same night forty miles over the Bad Lands in four hours, and reached General Whistler's steamboat at one o'clock. During my absence the Indians had made their appearance on the different hills in the vicinity, and the troops from the boat had had several skirmishes with them. When General Whistler had finished reading the despatches, he said, 'Cody, I want to send information to General Terry concerning the Indians who have been skirmishing around here all day. I have been trying all the evening long to induce some one to carry my despatches to him, but no one seems willing to make the trip, and I have got to fall back on you. It is asking a great deal, I know, as you have just ridden eighty miles; but it is a case of necessity, and if you'll go, Cody, I'll see that you are well paid for it.'

"'Never mind about the pay,' said I, 'but get your despatches ready and I'll start at once.'

"In a few minutes he handed me the package, and, mounting the same horse which I had ridden from General Terry's camp, I struck out for my destination. It was two o'clock in the morning when I left the boat, and at eight o'clock I rode into General Terry's camp, just as he was about to march — having made one hundred and twenty-five miles in twenty-two hours.

"General Terry, after reading the despatches, halted his command and then rode on and overtook General Crook, with whom he held a council; the result was that Crook's command moved on in the direction which they had been pursuing, while Terry's forces marched back to the Yellowstone and crossed the river on steamboats. At the urgent request of General Terry I accompanied the command on a scout in the direction of the Dry Fork of the Missouri, where it was expected we would strike some Indians.

"The first march out from the Yellowstone was made in the night, as we wished to get into the hills without being discovered by the Sioux scouts. After marching three days, a little to the east of north, we reached the buffalo range and discovered fresh signs of Indians, who had evidently been killing buffaloes. General Terry now called on me to carry despatches to Colonel Rice, who was still camped at the mouth of Glendive Creek, on the Yellowstone, distant about eighty miles from us.

"Night had set in with a storm, and a drizzling rain was falling when, at ten o'clock, I started on this ride through a section of country with which I was entirely unacquainted. I travelled through the darkness a distance of about thirty miles, and at daylight I rode into a secluded spot at the head of a ravine where stood a bunch of ash-trees, and there I concluded to remain till night, for I considered it a very dangerous undertaking to cross the wide prairies in broad daylight, especially as my horse was a poor one. I accordingly unsaddled my animal, and ate a hearty breakfast of bacon and hardtack which I had stored in the saddle-pockets; then, after taking a smoke, I lay down to sleep, with my saddle for a pillow. In a few minutes I was in the land of dreams.

"After sleeping some time — I can't tell how long — I was suddenly awakened by a roaring, rumbling sound. I instantly seized my gun, sprang to my horse, and hurriedly secreted him in the brush. Then I climbed up the steep side of the bank and cautiously looked over the summit; in the distance I saw a large herd of buffaloes which were being chased and fired at by twenty or thirty Indians. Occasionally a buffalo would drop out of the herd, but the Indians kept on until they had killed ten or fifteen. Then they turned back and began to cut up their game.

"I saddled my horse and tied him to a small tree where I could reach him conveniently, in case the Indians should discover me by finding my trail and following it. I then crawled carefully back to the summit of the bluff, and in a concealed position watched the Indians for two hours, during which time they were occupied in cutting up the buffaloes and packing the meat on their ponies. When they had finished this work they rode off in the direction whence they had come and on the line which I had proposed to travel. It appeared evident to me that their camp was located somewhere between me and Glendive Creek, but I had no idea of abandoning the trip on that account.

"I waited till nightfall before resuming my journey, and then I bore off to the east for several miles, and by taking a semicircle to avoid the Indians I got back on my original course, and then pushed on rapidly to Colonel Rice's camp, which I reached just at daylight.

"Colonel Rice had been fighting Indians almost every day since he had been encamped at this point, and he was very anxious to notify General Terry of the fact. Of course I was requested to carry his despatches. After remaining at Glendive a single day, I started back to find

General Terry, and on the third day I overhauled him at the head of Deer Creek while on his way to Colonel Rice's camp. He was not, however, going in the right direction, but bearing too far to the East, and so I informed him. He then asked me to guide the command, and I did so.

"On arriving at Glendive I bade good-by to the general and his officers, and took passage on the steamer *Far West*, which was on her way down the Missouri."

The Custer Monument and Scout Curley.

CHAPTER XVIII

AROUND THE CAMP-FIRE IN A TRAPPER'S BIVOUAC — TELLING STORIES OF THE OLD TRAIL — OLD HATCHER'S TRIP TO THE INFERNAL REGIONS — COLONEL CODY'S STORY OF CALIFORNIA JOE — A PRACTICAL JOKE

THE majority of old-time trappers and scouts always had an inexhaustible fund of anecdote and adventure. Stories were often told at night when the day's duty of making the round of the traps was done, the beaver skinned, and the pelts hung up to cure. Their simple supper disposed, and being comfortably seated around their fire of blazing logs, each one of them indulged, as a preliminary, in his favourite manner of smoking. Some adhered to the traditional clay pipe, others, more fastidious, used nothing less expensive than a meerschaum. Many, however, were satisfied with a simple cigarette with its covering of corn husk. This was Kit Carson's usual method of smoking, and he was an inveterate partaker of the weed. Frequently there was no real tobacco to be found in the camp; either its occupants had exhausted their supply, or the traders had failed to bring enough at the last rendezvous[1] to go round. Then they were compelled to resort to the substitutes of the Indians. Among some tribes the bark of the red willow, dried and bruised, was used; others, particularly the mountain savages, smoked the genuine kin-nik-i-nick, a little evergreen vine growing on the tops of the highest elevations, and known as *larb*.

It was a rare treat to come across one of those solitary camps when out on a prolonged hunt, for the visitor was certain of a cordial welcome, and everything the generous men had was freely at your service. The crowning pleasure came at night, when stories were told under the silvery pines, with troops of stars overhead, around a glowing camp-fire, until the lateness of the hour warned all that it was time to roll up in their robes, if they intended to court sleep.

Let the reader, in fancy, accompany us to some thunder-splintered cañon of the great rock-ribbed Continental Divide, and when the shadows of night come walking along the mountains, seek one of these sequestered camps, take our place in the magic circle, and listen to wondrous tales as they are passed around. There is nothing to disturb the magnificent silence save an occasional soughing of the fitful breeze in the tops of the towering pines, or the gentle babbling of some tiny rivulet as its water soothingly flows over the rounded pebbles in its bed. There is a charm in the environment of such a spot that will photograph its picture on the memory as the gem of all the varied experiences of a checkered life.

One of the best raconteurs was Old Hatcher, as he was known throughout the mountains. He was a famous trapper of the late '40's. Hatcher was thoroughly Western in all his gestures, moods, and dialect. He had a fund of stories of an amusing, and often of a marvellous cast. It was never any trouble to persuade him to relate some of the scenes in his wayward, ever-changing life; particularly if you warmed him up with a good-sized bottle of whiskey, of which he was inordinately fond.

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[1] The rendezvous, in trapper's parlance, was a point somewhere in the region where the agents of the fur companies congregated to purchase the season's catch, and where the traders brought such goods as trappers needed, to sell.

When telling a story he invariably kept his pipe in his mouth, using his hands to cut from a solid plug of Missouri tobacco, whenever his pipe showed signs of exhaustion. He also fixed his eyes on some imaginary object in the blaze of the fire, and his countenance indicated a concentration of thought, as if to call back from the shadowy past the coming tale, the more attractive, perhaps, by its extreme improbability.

He declared that he once visited the realms of Pluto, and no one ever succeeded in disabusing his mind of the illusion.

The story is here presented just as he used to tell it, but divested of much of its dialect, so hard to read, and much more difficult to write: —

"Well!" beginning with a vigorous pull at his pipe. "I had been down to Bent's Fort to get some powder, lead, and a few things I needed at the beginning of the buffalo season. I remained there for some time waiting for a caravan to come from the States which was to bring the goods I wanted. Things was wonderfully high; it took a beaver-skin for a plug of tobacco, three for a cup of powder, and other knick-knacks in proportion. Jim Finch, an old trapper that went under by the Utes near the Sangre de Cristo Pass, a few years ago, had told me there was lots of beaver on the Purgatoire. Nobody knowed it; all thought the creeks had been cleaned out of the varmints. So down I goes to the cañon, and sot my traps. I was all alone by myself, and I'll be darned if ten Injuns didn't come a screeching right after me. I cached. I did, and the darned red devils made for the open prairie with my animals. I tell you, I was mad, but I kept hid for more than an hour. Suddenly I heard a tramping in the bushes, and in breaks my little gray mule. Thinks I them 'Rapahoes ain't smart; so tied her to grass. But the Injuns had scared the beaver so, I stays in my camp, eating my lariat. Then I begun to get kind o' wolfish and squeamish; something was gnawing and pulling at my inwards, like a wolf in a trap. Just then an idea struck me, that I had been there before trading liquor with the Utes.

"I looked around for sign, and hurrah for the mountains if I didn't find the cache! And now if I didn't kiss the rock that I had pecked with my butcher-knife to mark the place, I'm ungrateful. Maybe the gravel wasn't scratched up from that place, and to me as would have given all my traps for some Taos lightning, just rolled in the delicious fluid.[1]

"I was weaker than a goat in the spring, but when the Taos was opened, I fell back and let it run in. In four swallows I concluded to pull up stakes for the headwaters of the Purgatoire for meat. So I roped old Blue, tied on my traps, and left.

"It used to be the best place in the mountains for meat, but nothing was in sight. Things looked mighty strange, and I wanted to make the back track; but, says I, here I am, and I don't turn, surely.

"The bushes was all scorched and curly, and the cedar was like fire had been put to it. The big, brown rocks was covered with black smoke, and the little drink in the bottom of the cañon was dried up. I was now most under the old twin peaks of 'Wa-te-yah[1]'; the cold snow on top looking mighty cool and refreshing.

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[1] A very bad quality of whiskey made in Taos in the early days, which, on account of its fiery nature, was called "Taos Lightning."

"Something was wrong; I must be shoving backwards, I thought, and that before long, or I'd go under, so I jerked the rein, but I'll be dog-goned, and it's true as there's meat running, Blue kept going forward. I laid back and cussed and kicked till I saw blood, certain. Then I put out my hand for my knife to kill the beast, but the 'Green River'[2] wouldn't come. I tell you some unvisible spirit had a paw there, and it's me that says it, 'bad medicine' it was, that trapping time.

"Loosing my pistol, the one I traded at Big Horn, the time I lost my Ute squaw, and priming my rifle, I swore to keep right on; for after staying ten years in these mountains, to be fooled this way wasn't the game for me nohow.

"Well, we, I say, 'we,' for Blue *was* some — as good as a man any day; I could talk to her, and she'd turn her head as if she understood me. Mules are knowing critters — next to human. At a sharp corner Blue snorted, and turned her head, but couldn't go back. There, in front, was a level cañon with walls of black and brown and gray stone, and stumps of burned piñon hung down ready to fall onto us; and, as we passed, the rocks and trees shook and grated and croaked. All at once Blue tucked her tail, backed her ears, bowed her neck, and squealed right out, a-rearing on her hind legs, a-pawing, and snickering. This hoss didn't see the cute of them notions; he was for examining, so I goes to jump off and lam the fool; but I was stuck tight as if there was tar on the saddle. I took my gun, that there iron, my rifle, and pops Blue over the head, but she squealed and dodged, all the time pawing; but it wasn't no use, and I says, 'you didn't cost more than two blankets when you was traded from the Utes, and two blankets ain't worth more than two beaver-skins at Bent's Fort, which comes to two dollars a pair, you consarned ugly pictur, — darn you, anyhow! Just then I heard a laughing. I looks up, and two black critters — they wasn't human, sure, for they had black tails and red coats — Indian cloth, cloth like that traded to the Indians, edged with white, shiny stuff, and brass buttons.

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[1] The Ute name for the Spanish Peaks.

[2] His name for his knife. It was the custom of the old trappers and hunters to personify their weapons, usually in remembrance of the locality where they got them.

"They come forward and made two low bows. I felt for my scalp-knife, for I thought they was approaching to take me, but I couldn't use it — they was so darned polite.

"One of the devils said, with a grin and bow, 'Good-morning, Mr. Hatcher!'

"'H——!' says I, 'how do you know me? I swear this hoss never saw you before.'

"'Oh, we've expected you a long time,' said the other, 'and we are quite happy to see you — we've known you ever since your arrival in the mountains.'

"I was getting sort of scared. I wanted a drop of Taos mighty bad, but the bottle was gone, and I looked at them in astonishment, and said — 'The devil!'

"'Hush!' screamed one, 'you must not say that here — keep still, you will see him presently.'

"I felt streaked, and a cold sweat broke out all over me. I tried to say my prayers, as I used to at home, when they made me turn in at night —

"'Now I lay me.'

"Pshaw! I'm off again, I can't say it; but if this child *could* have got off his animal, he'd took hair and gone down the trail for Purgatoire.

"All this time the long-tailed devils was leading my animal, and me top of her, the biggest fool dug out, up the same cañon. The rocks on the sides was pecked smooth as a beaver-skin, ribbed with the grain, and the ground was covered with bits of cedar, like a cavayard of mules had been nipping and scattering them about. Overhead it was roofed, leastwise it was dark in here, and only a little light come through the holes in the rock. I thought I knew where we was, and eeched awfully to talk, but I sot still and didn't ask any questions.

"Presently we were stopped by a dead wall. No opening anywhere. When the devils turned from me, I jerked my head around quick, but there was no place to get out —the wall had growed up behind us too. I was mad, and I wasn't mad neither; for I expected the time had come for this child to go under. So I let my head fall on my breast, and I pulled the wool hat over my eyes, and thought for the last of the beaver I had trapped, and the buffalo as had taken my lead pills in their livers, and the poker and euchre I'd played at the Rendezvous at Bent's Fort. I felt comfortable as eating fat cow to think I hadn't cheated any one.

"All at once the cañon got bright as day. I looked up, and there was a room with lights and people talking and laughing, and fiddles screeching. Dad, and the preacher at home when I was a boy, told me the fiddle was the devil's invention; I believe it now.

"The little fellow as had hold of my animal squeaked out—'Get off your mule, Mr. Hatcher!'

"'Get off!' said I, for I was mad as a bull pricked with Comanche lances, for his disturbing me. 'Get off? I have been trying to, ever since I came into this infernal hole.'

"'You can do so now. Be quick, for the company is waiting,' says he, pert-like.

"They all stopped talking and were looking right at me. I felt riled. 'Darn your company. I've got to lose my scalp anyhow, and no difference to me — but to oblige you' — so I slid off as easy as if I had never been stuck.

"A hunchback boy, with little gray eyes in his head, took old Blue away. I might never see her again, and I shouted — 'Poor Blue! Good-by, Blue!'

"The young devil snickered; I turned around mighty stern — 'Stop your laughing, you hell-cat — if I am alone, I can take you,' and I grabbed for my knife to wade into his liver; but it was gone — gun, bullet-pouch, and pistol, like mules in a stampede.

"I stepped forward with a big fellow, with hair frizzled out like an old buffalo just before shedding time; and the people jawing worse than a cavayard of paroquets, stopped, while frizzly shouted: —

"'Mr. Hatcher, formerly of Wapakonnetta, latterly of the Rocky Mountains.'

"Well, there I stood. Things were mighty strange, and every darned nigger of them looked so pleased like. To show them manners, I said, 'How are you?' and I went to bow, but chaw my last tobacco if I could, my breeches was so tight — the heat way back in the cañon had shrunk them. They were too polite to notice it, and I felt for my knife to rip the dog-goned things, but recollecting the scalp-taker was stolen, I straightens up and bowed my head. A kind-looking, smallish old gentleman, with a black coat and breeches, and a bright, cute face, and gold spectacles, walks up and pressed my hand softly.

"'How do you do, my dear friend? I have long expected you. You cannot imagine the pleasure it gives me to meet you at home. I have watched your peregrinations in the busy, tiresome world with much interest. Sit down, sit down; take a chair,' and he handed me one.

"I squared myself on it, but if a ten-pronged buck wasn't done sucking when I last sot on a chair, and I squirmed awhile, uneasy as a gun-shot coyote; then I jumps up and tells the old gentleman them sort of fixings didn't suit this beaver, he prefers the floor. I sets cross-legged like in camp, as easy as eating meat. I reached for my pipe — a fellow so used to it — but the devils in the cañon had cached that too.

"'You wish to smoke, Mr. Hatcher? — we will have cigars. Here!' he called to an imp near him, 'some cigars.'

"They was brought in on a waiter, about the size of my bullet-pouch. I empties them into my hat, for good cigars ain't to be picked up on the prairie every day, but looking at the old man, I saw something was wrong. To be polite, I ought to have taken but one.

"'I beg pardon,' says I, scratching my scalp, 'this hoss didn't think — he's been so long in the mountains he's forgot civilized doings,' and I shoved the hat to him.

"'Never mind,' says he, waving his hand and smiling faintly, 'get others,' speaking to the boy alongside of him.

"The old gentleman took one and touched his finger to the end of my cigar — it smoked as if fire had been sot to it.

"'Waugh! the devil!' screams I, darting back.

"'The same!' chimed in he, biting off the little end of his, and bowing, and spitting it out, 'the same, sir.'

"'The same! what?'

"'Why — the devil.'

"'H—l! this ain't the hollow tree for this coon — I'll be making medicine,' so I offers my cigar to the sky and to the earth, like an Injun.

"'You must not do that *here* — out upon such superstition,' says he, sharp-like.

"'Why?'

"'Don't ask so many questions — come with me,' rising to his feet, and walking off slow and blowing his cigar-smoke over his shoulder in a long line, and I gets alongside of him. 'I want to show you my establishment — you did not expect to find this down here, eh?'

"My breeches was all-fired stiff with the heat in the cañon, and my friend, seeing it, said, 'Your breeches are tight; allow me to place my hand on them.'

"He rubbed his fingers up and down once, and by beaver, they got as soft as when I traded them from the Pi-Utes on the Gila.

"I now felt as brave as a buffalo in the spring. The old man was so clever, and I walked alongside of him like an old acquaintance. We soon stopped before a stone door, and it opened without touching.

"'Here's damp powder, and no fire to dry it,' shouts I, stopping.

"'What's the matter; do you not wish to perambulate through my possessions?'

"'This hoss doesn't savey what the human for perambulate is, but I'll walk plum to the hottest fire in your settlement, if that's all you mean.'

"The place was hot, and smelt of brimstone; but the darned screeching took me. I walks up to the other end of the lodge, and steal my mule, if there wasn't Jake Beloo, as trapped with me to Brown's Hole! A lot of hell-cats was a-pulling at his ears, and a-jumping on his shoulders, and swinging themselves to the ground by his long hair. Some was running hot irons into him, but when we came up they went off in a corner, laughing and talking like wildcats' gibberish on a cold night.

"Poor Jake! he came to the bar, looking like a sick buffalo in the eye. The bones stuck through his skin, and his hair was matted and long, all over, just like a blind bull, and white blisters spotted him. 'Hatch, old fellow! *you* here too?—how are you?' says he, in a faint-like voice, staggering and catching on to the bar for support—'I'm sorry to see you *here;* what did you do?' He raised his eyes to the old man standing behind me, who gave him such a look, he went howling and foaming at the mouth to the fur end of the den and fell down, rolling over the damp stones. The devils, who was chuckling by a furnace where was irons a-heating, approached easy, and run one into his back. I jumped at them and hollered, 'You owdacious little hell-pups, let him alone; if my scalp-taker was here, I'd make buzzard feed of your meat, and parfleche of your dog-skins,' but they squeaked out, to 'go to the devil.'

"'Waugh!' says I, 'if I *ain't* pretty close to his lodge, I'm a nigger!'

"The old gentleman speaks up, 'Take care of yourself, Mr. Hatcher,' in a mighty soft kind voice, and he smiled so calm and devilish—it nigh froze me. I thought if the ground would open with an earthquake, and take me in, I'd be much obliged anyhow. Thinks I, 'You saint-forsaken, infernal hell-chief, how I'd like to stick my knife in your withered old bread-basket.'

"'Ah! my dear fellow, no use trying—that's a *decided* impossibility.' I jumped ten feet. I swear a medicine-man couldn't a-heard me, for my lips didn't move, and how he knew is more than this hoss can tell.

"'I see your nervous equilibrium is destroyed; come with me.'

"At the other side the old gentleman told me to reach down for a brass knob. I thought a trick was going to be played on me, and I dodged.

"'Do not be afraid; turn it when you pull; steady; there, that's it.' It came, and a door shut of itself.

"'Mighty good hinges!' said I, 'don't make any noise, and go shut without slamming and cussing them.'

"'Yes — yes! some of my own importation. No, they were never made here.'

"It was dark at first, but whenever the other door opened, there was too much light. In another room there was a table in the middle, with two bottles, and little glasses like them in St. Louis at the drink-houses, only prettier. A soft, thick carpet was on the floor, and a square glass lamp hung from the ceiling. I sat cross-legged on the floor, and he on a sofa, his feet cocked on a chair, and his tail coiled under him, comfortable as traders in a lodge. He hollered something, I couldn't make out, and in comes two black crook-shanked devils with a round bench and a glass with cigars in it. They vamosed, and the old coon, inviting me to take a cigar, helps himself, and reared his head back, while I sorter lays on the floor, and we smoked and talked.

"'But have we not been sitting long enough? Take a fresh cigar, and we will walk. That was Purgatory where your quondam friend, Jake Beloo, is. He will remain there awhile longer, and, if you desire it can go, though it cost much exertion to entice him here, and then only after he had drunk hard.'

"'I wish you would, sir. Jake was as good a companion as ever trapped beaver, or gnawed poor bull in the spring, and he treated his squaw as if she was a white woman.'

"'For your sake I will; we may see others of our acquaintance before leaving this,' says he, sorter queer-like, as if to mean, no doubt of it.

"The door of the room we had been talking in shut of its own accord. We stooped, and he touched a spring in the wall, a trap-door flew open, showing a flight of steps. He went first, cautioning me not to slip on the dark stairs; but I shouted not to mind me, but thanked him for telling me, though.

"We went down and down, until I began to think the old cuss was going to get me safe too, so I sung out, — 'Hello! which way; we must be mighty nigh under Wah-to-yah, we've been going on so long?'

"'Yes,' said he, much astonished; 'we're just under the Twins. Why, turn and twist you ever so much, you do not lose your reckoning.'

"'Not by a long chalk! This child had his bringing-up at Wapakonnetta, and that's a fact.'

"From the bottom we went on in a dampish sort of a passage, gloomily lit up with one candle. The grease was running down the block that had an auger-hole bored in it for a candlestick, and the long snuff to the end was red, and the blaze clung to it as if it hated to part company, and turned black, and smoked at the point in mourning. The cold chills shook me, and the old gentleman kept so still, the echoes of my feet rolled back so solemn and hollow, I wanted liquor mighty bad — mighty bad!

"There was a noise smothered-like, and some poor fellow would cry out worse than Comanches a-charging. A door opened, and the old gentleman touching me on the back, I went in and he followed. It flew to, and though I turned right around, to look for sign to escape, if the place got too hot, I couldn't find it.

"'What now, are you dissatisfied?'

"'Oh, no! I was just looking to see what sort of a lodge you have.'

"'I understand you perfectly, sir; be not afraid.'

"My eyes were blinded in the light, but rubbing them, I saw two big snakes coming at me, their yellow and blood-shot eyes shining awfully, and their big red tongues darting backwards and forwards, like a panther's paw when he slaps it on a deer, and their jaws wide open, showing long, slim, white fangs. On my right four ugly animals jumped at me, and rattled their chains — I swear their heads was bigger than a buffalo's in summer. The snakes hissed and showed their teeth, and lashed their tails, and the dogs howled and growled and charged, and the light from the furnace flashed out brighter and brighter; and above me, and around me, a hundred devils yelled and laughed and swore and spit, and snapped their bony fingers in my face, and leaped up to the ceiling into the black, long spider-webs, and rode on the spiders which was bigger than a powder-horn, and jumped onto my head. Then they all formed in line, and marched and hooted and yelled; and when the snakes joined the procession, the devils leaped on their backs and rode. Then some smaller ones rocked up and down on springing boards, and when the snakes came opposite, darted way up in the air and dived down their mouths, screeching like so many Pawnee Indians for scalps. When the snakes was in front of us, the little devils came to the end of the snakes' tongues, laughing and dancing, and singing like idiots. Then the big dogs jumped clean over us, growling louder than a cavayard of grizzly bear, and the devils, holding on to their tails, flopped over my head, screaming — 'We've got you — we've got you at last!'

"I couldn't stand it no longer, and shutting my eyes, I yelled right out, and groaned.

"'Be not alarmed,' and my friend drew his fingers along my head and back, and pulled a little narrow black flask from his pocket, with — 'Here, take some of this.'

"I swallowed a few drops. It tasted sweetish and bitterish — I don't exactly know how, but as soon as it was down, I jumped up five times and yelled 'Out of the way, you little ones, and let me ride;' and after running alongside, and climbing up his slimy scales, I got straddle of a big snake, who turned his head round, blowing his hot, sickening breath in my face. I waved my old wool hat, and kicking him into a fast run, sung out to the little devils to get up behind, and off we started, screeching, 'Hurrah for Hell!' The old gentleman rolled over and bent himself double with laughing, till he pretty nigh choked. We kept going faster and faster till I got on to my feet, although the scales was mighty slippery, and danced Injun, and whooped louder than them all.

"All at once the old gentleman stopped laughing, pulled his spectacles down on his nose, and said, 'Mr. Hatcher, we had better go now,' and then he spoke something I couldn't make out, and all the animals stood still; I slid off, and the little hell-cats, a-pinching my ears and pulling my beard, went off squealing. Then they all formed in a half moon before us — the snakes on their tails, with heads way up to the black cobwebbed roof, the dogs reared on their hind feet, and the little devils hanging everywhere. Then they all roared, and hissed, and screeched several times, and wheeling off, disappeared just as the lights went out, leaving us in the dark.

"'Mr. Hatcher,' said the old gentleman again, moving off, 'you will please amuse yourself until I return;' but seeing me look wild, said, 'You have seen too much of me to feel alarmed for your own safety. Take this imp for your guide, and if he is impertinent, *put him through;* and for fear the exhibitions may overcome your nerves, imbibe of this cordial,' which I did, and everything danced before my eyes, and I wasn't a bit scared.

"I started for a red light that came through the crack of a door, and stumbled over a three-legged chair, as I pitched my last cigar-stump to one of the dogs chained to the wall, who caught it in his mouth. When the door was opened by my guide, I saw a big blaze like a prairie fire, red and gloomy; and big black smoke was curling and twisting and spreading, and the flames a-licking the walls, going up to a point, and breaking into a wide blaze, with white and green ends. There was bells a-tolling, and chains a-clinking, and mad howls and screams; but the old gentleman's medicine made me feel as independent as a trapper with his animals feeding around him, two pack of beaver in camp, with traps sot for more.

"Close to the hot place was a lot of merry devils laughing and shouting, with an old pack of greasy cards — it reminded me of them we used to play with at the Rendezvous — shuffling them to the time of the Devil's Dream, and Money Musk; then they'd deal in slow time, with the Dead March in Saul, whistling as solemn as medicine-men. Then they broke out sudden with Paddy O'Rafferty, which made this hoss move about in his moccasins so lively that one of them that was playing looked up and said, 'Mr. Hatcher, won't you take a hand? Make way, boys, for the gentleman.'

"Down I got amongst them, but stepped on one little fellow's tail, who had been leading the Irish jig. He hollered till I got off it, 'Owch! but it's on my tail ye are!'

"'Pardon,' said I, 'but you are an Irishman!'

"'No, indeed! I'm a hell-imp, he! he! who-oop! I-'m a hell-imp,' and he laughed and pulled my beard, and screeched till the rest threatened to choke him if he didn't stop.

"'What's trumps?" said I, 'and whose deal?'

"'Here's my place,' said one, 'I'm tired of playing; take a horn,' handing me a black bottle; 'the game's poker, and it's your next deal — there's a bigger game of poker on hand;' and picking up an iron rod heating in the fire, he punched a miserable fellow behind the bars, who cussed him and ran away into the blaze out of his reach.

"I thought I was great at poker by the way I gathered in the beaver-skins at the Rendezvous, but here the slick devils beat me without half trying. When they'd slap down a bully pair, they'd screech and laugh worse than trappers on a spree.

"Says one, 'Mr. Hatcher, I reckon you're a hoss at poker away in your country, but you can't shine down here — you ain't nowhere. That fellow looking at us through the bars was a preacher up in the world. When we first got him, he was all-fired hot and thirsty. We would dip our fingers in water, and let it run in his mouth, to get him to teach us the best tricks — he's a trump; he would stand and stamp the hot coals, and dance up and down while he told his experience. Whoopee! how he would laugh! He has delivered two long sermons of a Sunday, and played poker at night of five-cent antes, with the deacons, for the money bagged that day; and when he was in debt he exhorted the congregation to give more for the poor heathen in a foreign land, a-dying and losing their souls for the want of a little money to send them a gospel preacher — that the poor heathen would be damned to eternal fire if they didn't make up the *dough*. The gentleman that showed you around — old Sate, we call him — had his eyes on the preacher for a long time. When we got him, we had a barrel of liquor and carried him around on our shoulders, until tired of the fun, and threw him in the furnace yonder. We call him "Poke," for that was his favourite game. Oh, Poke,' shouted my friend, 'come here; here's a gentleman who wants to see you — we'll give you five drops of water, and that's more than your old skin's worth.'

"He came close, and though his face was poor, and all scratched, and his hair singed mighty nigh off, make meat of this hoss, if it wasn't old Cormon, that used to preach in the Wapakonnetta settlement! Many a time he's made my hair stand on end when he preached about the other world. He came closer, and I could see the chains tied on his wrists, where they had worn to the bone. He looked a darned sight worse than if the Comanches had scalped him.

"'Hello! old coon,' said I, 'we're both in that awful place you talked so much about; but I ain't so bad off as you yet. This young gentleman,' pointing to the devil who told me of his doings — 'this gentleman has been telling me how you took the money you made us throw in on Sunday.'

"'Yes,' said he, 'if I had only acted as I told others to do, I would not have been scorching here for ever and ever — water! water! John, my son, for my sake, a little water.'

"Just then a little rascal stuck a hot iron into him, and off he ran in the flames, 'cacheing' on the cool side of a big chunk of fire, a-looking at us for water; but I cared no more for him than the Pawnee whose scalp was tucked in my belt for stealing my horses on Coon Creek; and I said: —

"'This hoss doesn't care a cuss for you; you're a sneaking hypocrite; you deserve all you've got and more too — and look here, old boy, it's me that says so.'

"I strayed off a piece, pretending to get cool, but this hoss began to get scared, and that's a fact; for the devils carried Cormon until they got tired of him, and, said I to myself, 'Ain't they been doing me the same way? I'll cache, I will.'

"Well, now, I felt sort of queer, so I saunters along kind o' slowly, until I saw an open place in the rock, not minding the imps who was drinking away like trappers on a bust. It was so dark there, I felt my way mighty still, for I was afraid they'd be after me. I got almost to a streak of light when there was such a rumpus in the cave that gave me the trembles. Doors was slamming, dogs growling and rattling their chains, and all the devils a-screaming. They come a-charging; the snakes was hissing sharp and wiry; the beasts howled long and mournful, and thunder rolled up overhead, and the imps was yelling and screeching like they was mad.

"It was time to break for timber, sure, and I run as if a wounded buffalo was raising my shirt with his horns. The place was damp, and in the narrow rock, lizards and vipers and copperheads jumped out at me, and climbed on my legs, but I stamped and shook them off. Owls, too, flopped their wings in my face and hooted at me, and fire blazed out and lit the place up, and brimstone smoke came nigh choking me. Looking back, the whole cavayard of hell was coming; nothing but devils on devils filled the hole!

"I threw down my hat to run faster, and then jerked off my old blanket, but still they was gaining on me. I made one jump clean out of my moccasins. The big snake in front was getting closer and closer, with his head drawed back to strike; then a hell-dog run up nearly alongside, panting and blowing with the slobber running out of his mouth, and a lot of devils hanging on to him, who was a-cussing me and screeching. I strained every joint, but it was no use, they still gained — not fast — but gaining. I jumped and swore, and leaned down, and flung out my hands, but the dogs was nearer every time, and the horrid yelling and hissing way back grew louder and louder. At last, a prayer mother used to make me say, I hadn't thought of for twenty years, came right before me as clear as a powder-horn. I kept running and saying it, and the darned devils held back a little. I gained some on them. I stopped repeating it, to get my breath, when the foremost dog made a lunge at me — I had forgot it. Turning up my eyes, there was the old gentleman looking at me, and keeping alongside without walking. His face wasn't more than two feet off, and his eyes was fixed steady, and calm and devilish. I screamed right out. I shut my eyes, but he was there still. I howled and spit, and hit at it, but couldn't get his darned face away. A dog caught hold of my shirt with his fangs, and two devils, jumping on me, caught me by the throat, a-trying to choke me. While I was pulling them off, I fell down, with about thirty-five of the infernal things and the dogs and the slimy snakes on top of me, a-mashing and tearing me. I bit pieces out of them, and bit again, and scratched and gouged. When I was 'most give out, I heard the Pawnee scalp-yell, and use my rifle for a poking stick, if in didn't charge a party of the best boys in the mountains. They slayed the devils right and left, and set them running like goats, but this hoss was so weak fighting he fainted away. When I come to, I was on the Purgatoire, just where I found the liquor, and some trappers was slapping their 'whats' in my face to bring me to. All around where I was laying, the grass was pulled up, and the ground dug with my knife, and the bottle, cached when I traded with the Utes, was smashed to flinders against a tree.

"'Why, what on earth, Hatcher, have you been doing here? You was kicking and tearing around, and yelling as if your scalp was taken. We don't understand these hifalootin notions.'

"'The devils of hell was after me,' said I, mighty gruff. 'This hoss has seen more of them than he ever wants to see again.'

"They tried to get me out of the notion, but I swear, and I'll stick to it, I saw a heap more of the all-fired place than I want to again. If it ain't a fact, I don't know fat cow from poor bull."

Hatcher always ended his yarn with this declaration, and you could never make him believe that he had had only a touch of delirium tremens.

This story is related by Colonel W. F. Cody: —

"In 1864 two military expeditions were sent into the northwest country to disperse any hostile gatherings of Indians, one expedition starting from Fort Lincoln on the Missouri River under command of General George A. Custer. It was on this expedition that Custer discovered gold in the Black Hills, a discovery which finally led up to the great Sioux war of 1876, when he lost his life in the battle of the Little Big Horn. The other expedition started from Rawlins on the Union Pacific Railway to go north into the Big Horn Basin in the Big Horn Mountain country. This expedition was commanded by Colonel Anson Mills. I was chief scout and guide of the expedition.

"One day, when we were on the Great Divide of the Big Horn Mountains, the command had stopped to let the pack-train close up. While we were resting there, quite a number of officers and myself were talking to Colonel Mills, when we noticed, coming from the direction in which we were going, a solitary horseman about three miles distant. He was coming from the ridge of the mountains. The colonel asked me if I had any scouts out in that direction, and I told him I had not. We naturally supposed that it was an Indian. He kept drawing nearer and nearer to us, until we made out it was a white man, and as he came on I recognized him to be California Joe.[1]

"When he got within hailing distance, I sung out, 'Hello, Joe,' and he answered, 'Hello, Bill.' I said:

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[1] If "California Joe" had any other name, but few knew it; he was a grizzled trapper and scout of the old régime. He was the best all-round shot on the plains. He was the first man to ride with General Custer into the village of Black Kettle, of the Cheyennes, when that chief's band was annihilated in the battle of the Washita, in November, 1868, by the U. S. Cavalry and the Nineteenth Kansas. Joe was murdered in the Black Hills several years ago.

'Where in the world are you going to, out in this country?' (We were then about five hundred miles from any part of civilization.) He said he was just out for a morning ride. I introduced him to the colonel and officers, who had all heard and read of him, for he had been made famous in Custer's *Life on the Plains*. He was a tall man, about six feet three inches in his moccasins, with reddish gray hair and whiskers, very thin, nothing but bone, sinew, and muscle. He was riding an old cayuse pony, with an old saddle, a very old bridle, and a pair of elk-skin hobbles attached to his saddle, to which also hung a piece of elk-meat. He carried an old Hawkins rifle. He had an old shabby army hat on, and a ragged blue army overcoat, a buckskin shirt, and a pair of dilapidated greasy buckskin pants that reached only a little below his knees, having shrunk in the wet; he also wore a pair of old army government boots with the soles worn off. That was his make-up.

"I remember the colonel asking him if he had been very successful in life. He pointed to the old cayuse pony, his gun, and his clothes, and replied, 'This is seventy years' gathering.' Colonel Mills then asked him if he would have anything to eat; he said he had plenty to eat, all he wanted was tobacco. Tobacco was very scarce in the command, but they rounded him up sufficient to do him that day. When invited to go with us, he said he was not particular where he went, he would just as soon go one way as the other; he remained with us several days, in fact, he stayed the entire trip.

"He was of great assistance to me, as he knew the country thoroughly. He was a fine mountain guide, but I could seldom find him when I most needed him, as he was generally back with the column, telling frontier stories and yarns to the soldiers for a chew of tobacco.

"One day I rode back from the advance guard to ask the colonel how far he wanted to go before camping, and while I was riding along talking to him, we noticed that the advance guard had stopped and were standing in a circle, evidently looking at something very intently. They were so interested that they did not come to their senses until the colonel and myself rode in among them. Then they immediately moved forward, leaving the colonel and myself to see what they had been investigating. It was a lone grave in the desolate mountains, and whoever had been buried there evidently had friends, because the spot was nicely covered with stones to prevent the wolves from digging up the corpse.

"We were looking at this grave when old Joe rode up, and as he stopped he threw down his hat on the pile of rocks and said, 'At last.'

"The colonel said, 'Joe, do you know anything about the history of this grave?' Joe replied, —

"Well I should think I did.' The colonel then asked him to tell us about it. Joe said: —

"'In 1816'—we didn't stop to think how far back 1816 was—'I had been to Astoria at the mouth of the Columbia River with a company of fur traders, and had been trapping in that country for two or three years, and by that time the party had made up their minds they would start back to the States, across the mountains. They were headed for the Missouri River, and when they got there, they intended to build a boat and float down to St. Louis. As they were coming across the Continental Divide of the Rocky Mountains, had reached the eastern slope, and were coming down one of the tributaries of the Stinking Water, some one of the party discovered what he thought to be gold nuggets in the bed of the stream. The water was clear. Every man went down to the water prospecting. The stream was so full of gold nuggets that they all jumped off their horses, leaving them packed as they were, and commenced throwing gold nuggets out on the banks.

"They abandoned everything they had with them, provisions and all, excepting their rifles, and prepared to load the gold.

"'Then they started for the Missouri River again, and when they reached the spot where this grave was, a man was taken suddenly ill, died in a very few minutes, and they buried him there.'

"Old Joe gave a sly wink, as much as to say, 'We buried the money with the man.'

"At this time quite a number of officers gathered around where the advance of the command had halted, and there may have been thirty or forty soldiers listening to this story; there were some who took it to be one of Joe's lies that he usually told for tobacco.

"The colonel ordered the bugler to sound 'forward.' The command moved on and within five or six miles went into camp. But every man who had listened to Joe's story of this grave, feeling that there was some hundred thousand dollars buried in it, gave it a look as they passed by.

"We moved on and went into camp. Joe was messing with me, and after we had supper he said, 'Bill, would you like to see a little fun to-night?' I said, 'Yes, I am in for fun or anything else.' He said, 'As soon as it gets dark you follow me.' I said, 'You bet I will follow you,' thinking all the time that he was going back to dig this fellow up.

"As soon as it was dark he started and motioned me to follow him, but, instead of going back on the trail, he went in the direction that we intended to go in the morning. Thinks I to myself, 'That is good medicine, we won't go directly back on the trail but follow another.'

"I asked him if we did not want to take a pick and shovel with us, and he said, 'What for?' I said, 'We will need it.' He said, 'No, we won't need it; you come on.'

"When we got outside the camp he commenced to turn around to the left, getting back on our trail. I said, 'This is all right.' He was now going back toward the grave. We went about a mile on the trail and he said, 'Sit down here.' I said, 'Don't we want to go on?' He said, 'What for?' I said, 'To dig that fellow up and get the money.' He said, 'The money be damned; I never saw the bloomin' grave before,' or something like that. I was disappointed. He said, 'Wait a few minutes until after "taps," and you will see that camp empty itself.'

"Presently here they came, scouts, soldiers, and packers by the dozen, sneaking through the brush and hurrying back on the trail. Old Joe laid down behind this bowlder and just rolled with laughter to see them going to dig up the grave.

"The next morning the boys told me that they dug up the grave and found some bones; they dug up a quarter of an acre of ground and never got the colour of a piece of gold; then they 'tumbled.'"

1000 Mile Tree. Weber Canon Utah

CHAPTER XIX

MORE STORIES OF THE TRAIL — FRAZIER AND THE BEAR — AN INDIAN ELOPEMENT — THE OGALLALLAS AND THE BRÛLÉS — CHAF-FA-LY-A — KIT CARSON ON THE YELLOWSTONE — BATTLE WITH THE BLACKFEET — CARSON, BRIDGER, AND BAKER ON THE PLATTE — JIM COCKRELL — PEG LEG SMITH

Kit Carson.

ONE of the Old American Fur Company's trappers by the name of Frazier, as often told of him around the camp-fire, was one of those athletic men who could outrun, outjump, and throw down any man among the more than a hundred with whom he associated at the time. He was the best off-hand shot in the whole crowd, and possessed of a remarkably steady nerve. He met with his death in a curious way. Once when away up the Platte he with one of his companions were hunting for game in an aspen grove. Suddenly an immense grizzly bear came ambling along about fifty yards away, evidently unaware of his enemy, man, being near him. Frazier told his comrade to take to a tree, while he would stand behind one of the others and kill the beast. He raised his rifle, fired, and the bullet lodged just above the bear's eye. As the ball struck him, the animal seemed intuitively to get the direction from which it came, and started for Frazier. The aspens have a very smooth, slippery bark and are very difficult to climb. Frazier failed to get high enough to be out of reach of the dying and enraged bear, and in a few minutes was a mangled mass at the foot of the tree, both he and the bear dead.

The majority of people, probably, imagine that the white man learned the art of trapping from the Indian; but the converse is the case. The savages, long before their contact with the white man, silently crept along the banks of the creeks and, caching themselves in the brush on their margin, with a patience characteristic of the race, waited for the beaver to show himself in the shallow water, or crawl on the banks, when they killed him with their stone-pointed arrows. The process was a tedious one, and they earnestly desired to know of some other method of capturing the wary little animal, so necessary in their domestic economy. So to their intense satisfaction, when the white man came among them, they saw him walk boldly along the streams and place a curious instrument in the water, which caught the beaver and held him until the trapper was ready to take him out.

With their usual shyness the Indians watched the white man's method from the underbrush skirting the margin of the creeks, and when the trapper had left, they stole his trap and carried it off to their village. A long time elapsed before the savage learned how to use the trap which had so interested him. It was not until the white man taught him that he learned how to watch the beaver at work in the pale moonlight; how to know where the beaver-houses were, the proper method of placing the trap, its peculiar bait, and then to leave it to catch the beaver.

The following story was told many years ago by George P. Belden, and it is the second instance of Indian elopement that has come under the observation of the authors of this book. It occurred some time in the early '40's.

"The Ogallallas and Brûlés were once the most powerful tribes on the plains, and were particularly friendly. The chief of the Brûlés was an old and experienced warrior. The chief of the Ogallallas had a son whose name was Souk. The old Brûlé frequently noticed the young Ogallalla, and seemed mightily pleased with him. On one or two occasions he spoke to Souk encouragingly, and one day went so far as to invite him to visit his tribe, and spend a few days at his lodge. These visits were often repeated, and it was during one of them Souk met the daughter of his friend, who was the belle of her tribe, and, besides her great personal charms, was esteemed to be the most virtuous and accomplished young woman in the nation. It did not take long for her to make an impression on the heart of Souk, and soon both the young people found themselves over head and ears in love with each other.

"The Indian girl was proud of her lover, as well she might be, for he was only twenty-eight years of age, tall, handsome, good-tempered, and manly in his deportment. Besides these considerations in his favour, he was virtually the head of his tribe, and no warrior was more renowned for deeds of valour. A born chief, the idol of his aged father, prepossessing in his appearance, already the leader of his band and its chief warrior. He was just such a person as was likely to move the heart and excite the admiration of a young girl.

"Chaf-fa-ly-a was the only daughter of the Brûlé chief, and the spoiled pet of her father. She was tall, lithe, and agile as an antelope. She could ride the wildest steed in her father's herds, and no maiden in the tribe could shoot her painted bow so well, so daintily braid her hair, or bead moccasins as nicely as Chaf-fa-ly-a. Giving all the love of her passionate nature to Souk, he loved her with all the strength of his manly heart in return. Day after day the lovers lingered side by side, sat under the shade of the great trees by the clear-running brook, or hand in hand gathered wild flowers in the shadows of the hills.

"Sometimes Souk was at the village of his father, but he always made haste to excuse himself, and hurried back to the camp of the Brûlé chief. In truth he was never content, except when by the side of the bewitching Chaf-fa-ly-a. The old men knew of the growing attachment between their children, and seemed rather to encourage than to oppose it. Chaf-fa-ly-a was buoyantly happy, and a golden future seemed opening up before her. Souk often reflected how happy he would be when he and his darling were married; and frequently at night, when the stars were out, the young lovers would sit for hours and plan the future happiness of themselves and the people over whom they would rule.

"One day Souk returned to his father's camp, and formally notified him of his love for Chaf-fa-ly-a, and demanded her in marriage. The old chief listened attentively, and at the close of Souk's harangue rose and struck the ground three times with his spear, declaring that he knew of no reason why his son should not be made happy, and have Chaf-fa-ly-a to wife. The grateful Souk was so overjoyed, that, forgetting his position and the rank of his chief, he fell upon his neck, and, kissing him again and again, actually shed tears. Putting him kindly aside, the father, well knowing the impatience of young lovers, hastily summoned three of his most distinguished chiefs, and said to them, 'Mount your swiftest horses! go to the camps of the Brûlé, and when you have come to him, say, Souk, the son of his old friend, loves his only daughter, Chaf-fa-ly-a, and that I demand her of him in marriage to my son. You will also say that, according to the ancient customs of our tribes, I will pay to him whatever presents he may demand for the maiden, and that it is my desire, the friendship long existing between ourselves and our people may be cemented by the marriage of our children.'

"Bowing low, the chiefs retired, and were soon on their way to the Brûlé village, which was three days' journey distant. Rather than wait impatiently in the camp until the chiefs would return, Souk proposed to go on a short hunting excursion with some warrior friends to whom he could unbosom himself.

"Meantime the chiefs had proceeded on their errand, and on the evening of the third day caught sight of the Brûlé camp. They were hospitably received by the venerable chief, who did all in his power to make them comfortable after their fatiguing ride. On the following morning the chief assembled his counsellors, and, making a great dog-feast, heard the request of the ambassadors. When they had done speaking, the Brûlé rose and announced his consent to the marriage, saying he was delighted to know that his daughter was to be the wife of so brave and worthy a young man as the son of his friend. He then dismissed the chiefs, stating that he would shortly send an embassy to receive the promised presents, and complete the arrangements for the marriage of the young couple.

"When the chiefs returned to their camp and announced the result of their mission, there was great rejoicing, and Souk, who had cut his hunt short and returned before the chiefs, was now, perhaps, the happiest man in the world. There was still, however, one thing which greatly troubled him. He knew his father was very proud, and considered the honour of an alliance with his family so great that but few presents would be required to be made. On the other hand, the old Brûlé was exceedingly parsimonious, and, no doubt, would take this opportunity to enrich himself by demanding a great price for his daughter's hand.

"Determined not to wait the pending negotiations before seeing his sweetheart, Souk summoned a band of his young warriors, and, burning with love, set out for the Brûlé camp. It being the month of June, Souk knew the old chief would have removed from his winter encampment to his summer hunting-grounds and pasture, on the Lower Platte. This would require some seven or eight days' more travel, and carry him through a portion of the territory of his enemies; but love laughs at danger, and, selecting eight tried companions, he set out. The evening of the second day brought him to the border of his father's dominions, and, selecting a sheltered camp by the side of a little stream, they determined to rest their animals for a day before crossing the territory of the hostile Cheyennes.

"As soon as it was dark they saddled their horses, and, swimming the Upper Platte, set out to cross the enemy's lands. Their route lay in a southeasterly direction, and led them over a fine hilly country, almost destitute of wood, except in the deep valleys and narrow ravines. The sun had long passed the meridian, the horses had rested, and the travellers taken their midday meal, but as yet had seen nothing to indicate that man was anywhere in this vast region.

"The sun was fast going down, and they were endeavouring to reach a good camping-ground known to several of the party, when suddenly, as they were descending a mountain, they saw below them smoke curling up, and, in the distance, two objects which looked like ants on the plain. From their position they could not see the fires from whence the smoke arose, but the sight of it caused them hastily to dismount and lead their horses under shelter of the projecting rocks, that they might not be discovered.

"Two advanced on foot to reconnoitre, creeping cautiously round the base of the rocks, and then onward among fallen masses that completely screened them. At length they reached a point from which they beheld, about a half a mile below them, an encampment of over one hundred men. Three large fires were blazing, and while groups were gathered around them, others were picketing their horses, and evidently preparing to encamp for the night. Souk's men had not long been in their observatory when they saw two men riding furiously down the valley toward the camp, and they instantly surmised these were the two black spots they had seen on the plain, and that Souk and his party had been discovered. They were not long left in doubt, however, for as soon as the horsemen reached the camp they rode to the chief's lodge, commenced gesticulating wildly, and pointing toward the cliffs where Souk and his men were. A crowd gathered around the new-comers, and presently several were seen to run to their horses and commence saddling up. The scouts now hastily left their hiding-place, and hurried back to Souk, whom they informed of all that was occurring below.

"Not a moment was to be lost, and, ordering his men to mount, Souk turned up the mountain along the path he had just come. He knew he had a dangerous and wily enemy to deal with, ten times his own in numbers, and that it would require all his skill to elude them, or the greatest bravery to defeat them, should it become necessary to fight.

"Fortunately he knew a pass farther to the west, that was rarely used, and for this he pushed with all his might. On reaching the mountain top, and looking back, black objects could be seen moving rapidly up the valley, and they knew that the enemy was in pursuit of them.

All night Souk toiled along, and, when the morning began to break, saw the pass he was seeking several miles ahead. Reaching the mountain's edge at sunrise, they dismounted and began the perilous descent into the gorge. In two hours it was accomplished, and they entered the sombre shadows of the great cañon. They had begun to feel safe, when suddenly the man in front reined up his horse and pointed to several pony tracks in the sand. Souk dismounted and examined them, and, on looking around, saw where the animals had been picketed, apparently, about two hours before.

"Could it be possible that the enemy had reached the pass before him, and were waiting to attack him higher up in the gorge? He could hardly credit it, and yet it must be so, for who else could be in the lonely glen. Recollecting that the cañon to the right would carry him into the great pass some ten miles higher up, he still hoped to get through before the enemy reached it, and, hastily mounting, they galloped furiously forward. They had come in sight of the great pass, when, just as they were about to enter it, they saw a man sitting on a horse a few hundred yards ahead of them, and directly in the trail. On observing the Ogallallas, the horseman gave the Cheyenne war-whoop, and, in a moment, a dozen other mounted men appeared in rear of the first.

"Grasping his spear, Souk shouted his war-whoop, and, ordering his men to charge, dashed down upon the enemy. Plunging his spear into the nearest foe, he drew his battle-axe and clove open the head of the one in the rear, and before his comrades could come up with him had unhorsed a third. A shout down the great cañon caused Souk to hurriedly look that way, when he saw about fifty warriors galloping toward him. He now knew he had reached the pass ahead of the main body, and encountered only the scouts of the Cheyennes. Ordering his men to push on

up the pass to the great valley beyond, he, with his two companions, remained behind to cover their retreat. On coming to their dead and wounded warriors, the Cheyennes halted and held a conference, while Souk and his friends leisurely pursued their journey. In the gorge in which he then was, Souk knew ten men were as good as a hundred, and he was in no hurry to leave the friendly shelter of the rocks. Taking up a position behind a sharp butte, he fortified the place, and quietly waited for the Cheyennes. Hour after hour passed, but they did not appear. The shadows of evening were beginning to creep into the ravines, and several of Souk's party were anxious to quit their retreat and continue their journey, confident that the Cheyennes had returned to their camp; but the wily young Sioux told them to be patient, and he would inform them when it was time to go. The evening deepened into twilight, the moon rose over the peaks and stood overhead, indicating that it was midnight, but still Souk would not go. His men had begun to grumble, when suddenly a noise was heard in the gorge below, and presently voices and the tramp of horses could be distinguished. Souk ordered four of his men to mount and be ready to leap the rude rock breastworks when he gave them notice, and to cheer and shout as lustily as possible. He then lay down with the other four, and waited for the foe. To his delight he noticed, as the Cheyennes came up, many of them were dismounted and leading their ponies. They came within a few feet of the barricade before they perceived it, and then Souk and his comrades commenced a rapid discharge of arrows into their midst. Three or four shots had been fired before the Cheyennes knew what the matter was, or where the whizzing shafts came from. Then Souk shouted his battle-cry, and the four mounted Sioux, repeating it from behind the butte, dashed over the barricade and charged the enemy, who broke and fled in the utmost confusion down the gorge. In a moment Souk, with his remaining Sioux, was mounted and after them. The animals of the Cheyennes broke loose from some of the dismounted warriors before they could mount, and left them on foot. Several hid among the rocks, but Souk overtook and killed four. The pursuit was kept up for nearly five miles, when Souk turned back and hastily continued his journey to the Brûlé camp, where he arrived in safety on the evening of the seventh day.

"He was kindly received by the father of his prospective bride, and given a dozen fine lodges for himself and friends. The meeting between Souk and his sweetheart was as tender as that of lovers could be, and now, that they were once together, both were perfectly happy. Near the Brûlé encampment were some mountain vines covered with flowers, and here Souk and Chaf-fa-ly-a each day spent hour after hour in sweet communion with each other. The stream was dotted for miles with hundreds of richly painted teepees; thousands of horses and ponies were constantly to be seen grazing in the green valley, and scores of warriors in their gay and various-coloured costumes galloped to and fro among the villages. It was a pleasant sight at the home of the old Brûlé, and one that filled their young hearts with pride and joy, for all these herds and people were one day to be theirs.

"After lingering a month in the camp, the old Brûlé announced to Souk he was about to send the chiefs to receive the presents for Chaf-fa-ly-a's hand, and if the young man and his friends wished to return home it would be a favourable opportunity for them to do so. Souk took the hint and made preparations accordingly.

"By the advice of the old chief, the party took another route, and, although it was two days longer, it brought them in safety to the Ogallalla encampment.

"At Souk's request, his father immediately assembled the council, and the negotiations for Chaf-fa-ly-a's hand began. An aged Brûlé made the first speech, expatiating on the power of his chief, the richness of his tribe, and the beauty of Chaf-fa-ly-a. This was followed by an Ogallalla, who dwelt at length upon the power of his chief, his rank, and age, and upon the nobleness, bravery, and skill of Souk. Several other speeches were made on each side, in which the young man and woman were alternately praised, and the glory of their fathers extolled to the skies. The council then adjourned until the following day, the important point of the conference—the price of the lady's hand — not having been touched upon at all.

"Next day the conference continued, and toward evening the Brûlé chiefs, after having spoken a great deal, abruptly demanded fifty horses and two hundred ponies as the price for Chaf-fa-ly-a.

"The friends of Souk were a good deal surprised at the extravagant demand of the Brûlés, it being about three times more than they expected to give. Souk's father could not conceal his indignation, and, saying he would give but twenty-five horses and one hundred ponies, adjourned the council, directing the Brûlé chiefs to return home and inform their venerable head of his decision.

"Souk returned to his lodge with a heavy heart, for he clearly foresaw trouble, and that his love, like all other 'true loves,' was not to run smoothly. Summoning his friends, he desired them to make as many presents as possible to the Brûlé chiefs, and before they started he added five horses of his own, hoping by this liberality to secure their good-will. He also caused them to be secretly informed, that if they could induce the Brûlé chief to accept his father's offer, he would, on the day of his marriage, present to each of them a fine horse.

"Before leaving the Brûlé camp, Souk and Chaf-fa-ly-a had vowed a true lover's vow, that, come what would of the council, they would be faithful to each other, and die rather than break their plighted troth. Souk had also promised his betrothed he would return in the fall and make her his wife, with or without the consent of the tribes.

"As the summer months wore away, and no word was received from the Brûlé camp, Souk became each day more restless, and finally, calling together a few friends, started once more for the Brûlé's home.

"He was received most cordially by the old chief, and, as before, given most hospitable entertainment. Often, however, he thought he detected sadness on the old man's face, and on questioning Chaf-fa-ly-a as to the cause of her father's trouble, the poor girl burst into tears and confessed she was about to be sacrificed for her father's good. She said that the Cheyenne chief, with whom her father had long been at war, had asked her hand, and promised, on receiving her as one of his wives, to cease from warring with the Sioux. Her father, actuated by a desire to do his people and friends good, had, after the refusal of Souk's father to furnish the required presents, given the Cheyenne a promise, and they were to be married the following year, when the grass grew green on the earth. The old chief preferred greatly to have Souk for a son-in-law, but he wished also to serve his people and old friends. The treaty was to be binding on the Cheyennes, for the Ogallallas as well as the Brûlés, and therefore Souk and his father would be greatly benefited by her marriage to the Cheyennes.

"This astounding intelligence came near upsetting Souk's better judgment, and for a while he was nearly demented. Taking the fond girl in his arms, he swore, rather than see her the wife of the hated Cheyenne, he would spill both his own and her blood, and they would go to the happy hunting-grounds together. Chaf-fa-ly-a begged him to be calm, and she would make her escape with him and fly to his people. It was agreed that early in the spring, before the encampment moved to its summer pastures, Souk, with a chosen band, should come over the mountains, and in the confusion, when the tribe was on its march, they would seize a favourable opportunity to escape into the mountains, from which they could make their way to Souk's father and implore his protection.

"Cautioning him, even by a look, not to betray any knowledge of her engagement to the Cheyenne, the lovers parted, and next day Souk set out for his home, apparently utterly indifferent as to the result of the negotiations for his marriage.

"Slowly the winter months dragged along, and to the impatient Souk they seemed interminable; but at length the water began to come down from the mountains, and the ice grew soft on the streams. As soon as he saw these indications of returning spring, Souk called his bravest friends together and set out from the camp. He did not tell any one where he was going, and it was only when they began to ascend the mountains that they suspected they were on the way to the Brûlé camp. In eight days they descended the plain into the old chief's home.

"He was greatly astonished to see Souk, for he believed it impossible at that season of the year for any one to cross the mountain. However, he gave Souk and his friends a hearty welcome, and again provided them with everything they needed.

"Next day the chief rode down the river to prepare the camps for moving, and Souk and Chaf-fa-ly-a, being left alone in the camp, had all the opportunity they desired for laying their plans. Chaf-fa-ly-a said the camp would move in four days, and that in the meantime they must make every preparation for their flight. There was one horse in the herd, she said, that was the swiftest in the tribe, and he must be either killed or she would ride him. Her father had always objected to her mounting this animal because he was so vicious; but, now that he was away, it would be a good time for her to ride the animal, and show to her father that she was a better horsewoman than he thought. Once upon him, she could pretend a fondness for the beast, and thus secure him to ride on the trip. Souk agreed to all she said, and the wild horse was at once sent for. He reared and plunged fearfully, but at length he was conquered, and Chaf-fa-ly-a mounted his back. Souk rode by her side, and they galloped down the river to meet the old chief, who they knew must by that time be returning homeward, as it was nearly evening. They soon met him, and when he saw his daughter on the wild horse, he was greatly surprised, but not displeased, for all Indians are proud of their horsemanship. Cautioning her to be very careful and hold him fast, Souk, the old chief, and Chaf-fa-ly-a rode back to the village together.

"Next day Chaf-fa-ly-a again rode the wild horse, and in the evening slyly extracted a promise from her father that she should be permitted to ride him when the village changed its camping-ground.

"On the morning of the fourth day the herds were gathered, the teepees pulled down, and the village commenced its march to the summer pastures. The men had got the herds fairly on the way, and the sun was just tipping the icy peaks of the mountains, when Souk and Chaf-fa-ly-a mounted their steeds and galloped swiftly forward. Chaf-fa-ly-a rode the wild horse, and Souk was mounted on a splendid stallion. All of Souk's warriors had been sent the day before to Pole Creek, a day in advance, under the pretence of hunting.

"Riding on until they reached the head of the herd, they were about to pass, when the herders informed the young couple that it was the chief's orders no one should go ahead of the herd and they could proceed no farther. Giving the men a pleasant reply, Chaf-fa-ly-a said she was only trying the mettle of her horse, and at once turned back. They had gone but a little distance when they entered the sand-hills, and, making a wide circuit, came out far in advance of the herd. They were now on the banks of a little lake, and, giving their horses full rein, sped by its clear waters.

"Long before night the young people reached Pole Creek and found Souk's warriors. He hastily explained to them what had happened, and, charging them to remain, and if possible draw the enemy from the trail, Souk and his sweetheart again set forward.

"One of the warriors who remained behind was to personate a woman, and, if possible, make the old chief's people think he was Chaf-fa-ly-a. Souk said he knew a pass through the Black Hills that would bring them to his father's country two days sooner than by any other route, and, although the way was somewhat dangerous, they must take all risks and depend on the swiftness of their horses for their escape.

"All night they rode on, and at sunrise halted on the top of a high hill to breakfast on cold roast antelope and wild artichokes. Chaf-fa-ly-a's horse bore her light weight without seeming fatigued, but Souk was heavy and his steed began to show signs of distress.

"Far in the distance they could see the blue line of the gap that still lay between them and safety; and, hurriedly refreshing themselves from a spring of pure water, they again set out, hoping to reach it before night.

"It was near sundown when they began to ascend the high ridge that led into the gap, and they had just reached the crest when Chaf-fa-ly-a, scanning the valley below them, descried horsemen following on their trail. They had hoped they were not yet discovered, and under cover of night might still reach the pass in safety, but the horsemen soon divided, and one half went up the valley, while the others continued to follow the trail. Souk knew in a moment that those who went up the valley were going to head them off, and, although they had nearly double the distance to ride, their road was comparatively smooth, while Souk's lay along precipices and over crags. Calling to Chaf-fa-ly-a that they must now ride for their lives, Souk whipped up the horses, and they began to climb rapidly the rugged pathway.

"All night they pushed along, and at daylight found themselves quite near the pass. Souk scanned the valley through the hazy light, but could detect no traces of the Brûlé people. He began to hope that they had not yet arrived, and spoke encouragingly to Chaf-fa-ly-a, who, pale with fatigue, now sat upon her horse like a statue. Descending into the deep cañon, Souk directed Chaf-fa-ly-a to ride rapidly for the pass, while he followed close in the rear, ready to attack the enemy that might appear. They had gone about half a mile, and were just entering the jaws of the great gorge, when a cry of distress rose from the lips of the girl, and, looking to his right, Souk saw about twenty Brûlés rapidly closing on the pass. The noble girl whipped up her horse, and, darting forward like an arrow, shot through the pass full fifty yards ahead of the foremost Brûlé warrior.

"Souk grasped his battle-axe, and, reaching the pass just as the first Brûlé came up, struck his horse on the head, dropping him on the ground and sending the rider rolling over the rocks. The second warrior, seeing the fate of his companion, swerved his steed to one side and strove to pass Souk, but he quickly drew his bow and drove an arrow through the horse behind the fore-shoulder, causing him to drop to his knees and fling his rider on the ground.

"The lovers were now ahead of all of their pursuers, and, urging their gallant steeds to their utmost, they soon had the satisfaction of hearing the shouts of the Brûlés dying in the distance behind them. In an hour they halted, refreshed themselves, and rested their horses. In the distance they could see the Brûlés halting by a stream, and apparently resting also. The lovers were the first to move on, and, when once in the saddle, they lost no time.

"It was past noon when Souk saw some objects several miles off to the left, and soon made them out to be part of the Brûlés, who were making for the river, to cut him off from the ford. The race was a long one, but the lovers won it, and crossed in safety.

"On the third day they entered the great mountains and drew near the borders of the country of Souk's father. At sunset they crossed a little creek, which Souk pointed out to Chaf-fa-ly-a as the boundary of the Ogallalla lands. Riding forward a dozen miles, they halted in a wild, mountainous region, and, for the first time since starting, prepared to take some rest. Souk comforted Chaf-fa-ly-a with the assurance that another day would take them to his home, and that they were now well out of danger.

"A sheltered spot was selected for their camp, near a stream, and while Souk gathered some sticks to make a small fire, his bride walked down to the water's edge. He saw her turn up the stream, and in a moment more she was lost from view. The fire was soon lighted, and Souk busy preparing the evening meal, when suddenly he heard a fearful shriek at no great distance.

"Seizing his battle-axe, he rushed toward the spot from whence the sound proceeded, but could see no one. Calling the name of his bride, he dashed forward through the thicket, but could see or hear nothing of her. He called loudly again, but received no response. The silence was agonizing, and he listened for several moments, when he heard the crackling of some branches in the distance. He rushed frantically to the spot, but his career was quickly stopped by an object on the ground. It was the torn and now bloody mantle of his beloved. The mystery was in part explained — she had retired to this secluded spot to offer up a prayer to the Great Spirit for their safe deliverance, and, as was her custom, had taken off her mantle and spread it on the earth. On this she had knelt, when a grizzly bear, that terrible beast of the Rocky Mountains, had rushed upon her and killed her before she could utter a second cry. His huge paws were deeply imprinted on the sand, and the trail along which he had dragged his victim was distinctly visible. Souk, taking the rent garment, plunged into the brushwood.

"He crossed the thicket in several directions, but in vain; it was dark, and he could not follow the trail. He returned to the camp in a frame of mind bordering on despair. Raising his hand to heaven, he swore by the great Wa-con Ton-ka to track the beast to his den and slay him, or perish in the conflict. It seemed to him an age before the light appeared, but at length the gray streamers began to streak the east, and Souk was on the trail. Again and again he lost it, but the growing light enabled him to find it, and he pushed on. He found the lair half a mile out, where the beast had eaten a part of his beloved, and, as he looked at the blood-stains on the ground, his brain seemed about to burst from his skull. Pieces of garments were left on some of the bushes where the bear had dragged the body along. Far up into the mountains Souk followed the trail, but at length lost it among the rocks. All day he hunted for it in vain, and when night came he returned to his camp. He expected the enemy had come up during his absence, but he found the horses where he had left them, and the camp undisturbed. How he wished the Brûlés would come and kill him. He cursed himself, and wished to die, but could not. Then he slept, how long he knew not, but the sun was far up in the heavens and shining brightly when he awoke.

"Mounting one of the horses, and leading the other, he started at full speed. He wished to leave as quickly as possible, and forever, the cursed spot that had witnessed the destruction of all his earthly happiness. It afforded him some relief to ride fast, and he dashed onward, he neither knew nor cared where. His well-trained steed took the road for him, and as the evening shadows were beginning to creep over the valley, he saw far ahead the teepees of his father's village. He lashed his horse and rode like a madman into the town. His faithful warriors had returned, but they hardly knew their beloved young chief, so changed was he. At the door of his father's lodge his brave horse fell dead, and Souk rolled over on the ground insensible.

"He was carefully lifted up and laid on his own bed, where for many days he remained in a raging fever, at times delirious, and calling wildly on the name of Chaf-fa-ly-a. Little by little he recovered, and at length went about the village again, but he hardly ever spoke to any one; and for years the Brûlés and Ogallallas never visited each other."

In the early days the celebrated Kit Carson and Lucien B. Maxwell trapped on every tributary of the Platte and Yellowstone, long before they joined General Fremont's first exploring expedition as principal scouts and guides in company with Jim Bridger, Jim Baker, and others.

In the early '40's, Kit Carson as the leader, with a hundred subordinates, organized a party of trappers to operate upon the Yellowstone and its many tributaries. The Blackfeet, upon whose ground the men were to encroach, were bitter enemies of the whites, and it was well known that serious difficulties with those savages could not be avoided, so Carson prepared his plans for considerable fighting. He assigned one half his followers to the work of trapping exclusively, while the remainder were to attend to the camp duties and vigilantly guard it.

As Carson, on many previous occasions, had had tussles with the hostile Blackfeet, he was not at all disinclined to meet them again on their own ground; and as he felt doubly strong with such a large party of old mountaineers, he rather hoped that the savages would attack him, as he wished to settle some ancient scores with them.

Carson was, however, disappointed that season, and he could not at first understand why the Blackfeet had left him so severely alone; but he found out, later, that the smallpox had decimated them, and they were only too glad to retire to their mountain fastnesses, completely humbled, and hide in terror hoping to escape further attacks of the dreaded disease.

Carson and his party spent the winter in that region with the friendly Crows, passing a delightful season, with an abundance of food, living in the comfortable buffalo-skin lodges of the tribe, and joining in their many amusements.

While there was no lack of provisions for the party in the village of the kind-hearted Crows, their horses suffered greatly. The earth was covered with deep snow, and Carson and his trappers were kept busy every day gathering willow twigs and cottonwood bark to sustain the life of the animals. Great herds of buffalo, driven to the locality by the severity of the weather, and depending, too, upon the timber for their sustenance, made it even harder work to supply the horses.

On the opening of spring, Carson and his party commenced to trap again, and returning to the fruitful country of the hostile Blackfeet, they learned that the tribe had completely recovered from the visitation of the smallpox of the previous year. Some bands were camped near the trapping-ground, and were in excellent condition, spoiling for a fight with the whites.

Upon discovering the state of affairs, Carson and five of his most determined men set out on a reconnoitring expedition. They found the site of the Blackfeet village, and, hurrying back to camp, a party of forty-three was selected, with Carson as leader. The remainder were to follow on with their baggage, and if it should become necessary when they came up to the savages to assist them; Carson and his brave followers marched ahead, eager for a fight.

It did not require a very long time to overtake the savages, who had commenced to move their village; and making a sudden charge among them, Carson and his men killed ten of the savages at the first fire. The Blackfeet immediately rallied and began to retreat in good order. The whites were in excellent spirits over the result of the first dash and followed it up for more than three hours; then, their ammunition running low, their firing became less rapid, and they had to exercise the greatest caution. At this juncture the savages suspected the reason that the white men had moderated their attack, and, with most demoniacal yells, they rallied, and charged with such force that Carson and his men were obliged to retreat.

Now, in the charge of the Indians, the trappers could use their pistols with great effect, and the savages were again driven back. Again they rallied, however, and in such increased numbers that they forced Carson and his men once more to retreat.

During the last rally of the Indians, the horse of one of the trappers was killed, and fell with its whole weight on its rider. Six warriors immediately rushed forward to scalp the unfortunate man. Seeing his helpless condition, Carson rushed to his assistance, jumped from his horse, placed himself in front of his fallen companion, and shouting at the same instant for his men to rally around him, shot the foremost warrior dead with his unerring rifle.

Several of the trappers quickly responded to Carson's call, and the remaining five savages were compelled to dash off, without the coveted scalp of the fallen white man, but only two of them ever regained their places in the ranks of their brother braves, for three well-directed shots dropped them dead in their tracks.

Carson's horse had run away, so, as his comrade was now saved, he mounted behind one of the men who had come when he called for help, and rode back to the rest of his command. Then, being thoroughly exhausted, both parties ceased firing by mutual consent, each waiting for the other to renew hostilities.

While indulging in this armistice, the other trappers came up with the camp equipage. The savages showed no fear at this addition to the force of the enemy, but, calmly covering themselves among the detached rocks a little distance from the battle-ground, quietly awaited the expected onslaught.

With the fresh supply his companions had brought, Carson cautiously advanced on foot with reënforcements to dislodge the savages from their cover. The battle was renewed with increased vigour, but the whites eventually scattered the savages in all directions.

It was a complete victory for the trappers, as they had killed a great many of the Blackfeet warriors, and wounded a larger number, while their own loss aggregated but three men killed and only a few severely wounded.

Now that the battle was ended, the trappers camped on the ground where the bloody engagement occurred, buried the dead, tended the wounded, and, from that time on, pursued their vocation throughout the whole Blackfeet country without fear of molestation, so salutary had been the chastisement of the impudent savages. The latter took good care, ever afterward, to keep out of the way of the intrepid Carson, having had enough of him to last the rest of their lives.

During the battle with Carson's trappers, the Blackfeet had sent their women and children on in advance; and, when the engagement had ended, and the discomfited warriors, so much reduced in number, returned without one scalp, the big skin lodge, which had been erected for the prospective war-dance, was occupied by the wounded savages, and the hatred for the whites among the tribe was intensified to the last degree of bitterness.

After the season's ending, which had been very successful, Carson engaged himself as hunter, at the fort of the American Fur Company on the South Platte; and as game of all kinds — deer, elk, and antelope — was abundant, the duty was a delightful one.

The following spring, Carson, in conjunction with Bridger, Baker, and other famous plainsmen, trapped on all the affluents of the Platte, and camped for the following winter in the Blackfeet country, without seeing any of his enemies until spring had again made its rounds. He and his men then discovered that they were near one of the Blackfeet's greatest strongholds.

Upon this forty men, with Carson as the leader, were chosen to give them battle. They found the Indians, to the number of several hundred, and charged upon them. They met with a brave resistance, and the battle continued until darkness put an end to the fight, when both whites and savages retired. At the first sign of dawn

Carson and his party prepared for a renewal of the conflict, but not an Indian was to be seen. They had fled, taking away with them their dead and wounded.

Carson and his followers returned to their camp and held a council of war, at which it was decided that as the band they had whipped would report the affair to the chiefs of the several villages, the terrible loss they had sustained would inspire all the warriors to make a united effort to wipe out the trappers. The savages knew where their camp was established, so it would be wise to prepare for another grand battle on the same ground, by looking to their defences. To that end sentinels were posted on a lofty hill near by, breastworks were thrown up under Carson's supervision, and the utmost precaution taken to guard against a surprise.

One morning the sentinel on the top of the mountain announced by signals that the Indians were on the move; but the little fortification was already completed, and the anxious trappers coolly awaited the approach of the savages.

Slowly the redskins in full war-paint gathered around the sequestered camp, and more than a thousand warriors had congregated within half a mile of the trappers' breastwork in three days.

Dressed in their fancy bonnets, and hideously bedaubed with yellow and vermilion streaks across their foreheads and on each cheek, armed with bows, tomahawks, and long lances, they presented a formidable-looking front to the small number of whites. The trappers kept cool, however; every man clutched his rifle, determined to sell his life only at fearful cost to the confident savages.

They commenced one of their horrible war-dances right in sight and hearing of the trappers, and at dawn the following day they advanced toward the little fortification, carefully prepared for a concerted attack.

Carson cautioned his men to reserve their fire until the Indians were near enough to make sure that every shot would count; but the savages, seeing how effectively the trappers had intrenched themselves, retired after firing a few harmless shots, and went into camp a mile distant. Finally they separated into two bands, leaving the whites a breathing-spell. The latter were well aware an encounter must necessarily be of a most desperate character.

The Indians had evidently recognized Carson, who had so frequently severely punished them, and they made no further attempt to molest the trappers, much to the relief of the beleaguered men.

Jim Cockrell,[1] as he was known in the mountains, was one of the earliest of the old trappers. He left his home in Missouri in the spring of 1822, and started for the heart of the Rocky Mountains, with a single packhorse to carry his camp equipage, and a single riding-horse. He trapped by himself for more than two years. In a short time that terrible loneliness which comes to all men, for man is a gregarious animal, was experienced in all its horrors by this isolated trapper. Like all men of his class at that time, he was exceedingly superstitious. He wanted somebody to talk to, and in the absence of a possibility of finding one of his own kind, his greatest desire was for a dog, a true friend under all circumstances. He says that he prayed long and earnestly for the fulfilment of his wish. To his surprise on awaking one morning from the night's sleep he saw a dog lying on his robes alongside of him. Remote from all civilization and far from any Indian camp, he never, to the day of his death, had the slightest idea how the dog came to him; but no one could ever disabuse his mind of his belief that Providence had answered his appeal.

The youthful trapper avoided the Indians as much as possible, for, tenderfoot as he was at first, he knew well that they would harass him in every possible way, in order to drive him from a region which was their elysium. He found it an easy matter, after he became acquainted with their habits, to keep out of their sight. In a short time, also, he was under a sort of protection of Peg Leg Smith, who lived with his Indian wife near Soda Springs, now in Idaho.

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[1] Uncle of Senator Cockrell of Missouri.

James Cockrell was over six feet high, very hospitable, generous and kind to friends, but decidedly outspoken to his enemies. After having accumulated some money by trapping, he returned to Missouri, lived upon a fine farm, and died at a ripe old age.

Peg Leg Smith was a famous trapper, and after marrying a squaw of the Shoshone tribe, who proved to be a very efficient partner in preparing the pelts of the animals he had caught, he made a great deal of money.

He was very fond of whiskey and generally full of it, particularly while remaining in the settlements, and would have his fun if he had to make it for himself. In the early '30's, Peg Leg Smith came down from his mountain home, sold his season's trapping, then put up at the Nolan House at Independence, Missouri, for a general good time. In a very few hours he was drunk, and remained in that condition for some time. After he had been at the hotel a week, the clerk put his bill under the door of his room, simply to let him know the amount of his account. When Smith saw it he determined to have some fun out of it. He went down to the office apparently in a perfect rage, and holding the account up to the clerk, said he was grossly insulted; "here's this paper stuck under my door, and it's one of the greatest insults that I have ever received." Smith kept on talking in this wild strain for a few moments, until he arrested the attention of every one in the bar-room. The poor clerk tried to pacify him, but, failing completely, sent for Mr. Nolan, the proprietor, who, coming in, tried to reason with Smith, but all in vain. Finally, Smith in great indignation called for his horse. It was a fine animal, as he always rode the best that could be procured. Upon this demand the landlord told him to pay his bill and he could have his horse. He went back to his room, procured his gun, and started for the stable, which was about fifty yards from the house. The hostler had already been ordered not to let him have the animal and to lock the stable door. Peg Leg on reaching the stable demanded his horse, but he was refused. He raised his gun and shot the lock all to pieces. The fellows who were looking on screamed with laughter and made fun, greatly to the mortification of Nolan. Smith then told the hostler to take good care of his horse, and, his apparent indignation changing to a smile, he walked back to the house. Then he invited every one up to the bar and spent twenty or thirty dollars before he left for his room.[1]

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[1] The real name of this strange old trapper was Thomas L. Smith. He was eventually killed by the Indians.

On the Trail

CHAPTER XX

THE STORY OF THE BUILDING OF THE UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD — EXTRACT FROM GENERAL SHERMAN'S MEMOIRS — GENERAL DODGE'S DESCRIPTION OF THE COUNTRY WHEN HE FIRST SAW IT — EXPLORATIONS FOR A ROUTE — CONFERENCE WITH PRESIDENT LINCOLN — LOCATION OF THE MILITARY POST OF D. A. RUSSELL AND THE TOWN OF CHEYENNE — DRIVING THE LAST SPIKE

General G.M. Dodge.

IN this story of the Salt Lake Trail, our account would not be complete without including the history of the great "Iron Trail" that now practically, for a long distance, follows the grassy path of the lumbering stage-coach, the slowly moving freight caravans drawn by patient oxen, or the dangerous route of the relatively rapid Pony Express.

No better story of the construction of the Great Union Pacific Railroad can be found than the address of its chief engineer, General G. M. Dodge, before the Society of the Army of the Tennessee, at Toledo, Ohio, on the 15th of September, 1888. He had been over the whole region which extends from the Missouri River to Salt Lake in the early '50's, and, as has been said of him by a distinguished jurist, now dead: "He was an enthusiast who communicated enthusiasm to his working forces, and he showed his skill in the management of hostile Indians, and the ruffians and gamblers who followed the camp. The close of the war, in which he distinguished himself, left him at liberty to accept this position of chief engineer, and his intimate relations with Grant and Sherman put him on such terms with commanding officers of garrisons and military posts along the route, that he was enabled to avail himself of military aid against marauding Indians, and also frequently in maintaining order when worthless camp-followers become unruly."

The authors of this work have deemed it advisable to quote the greater part of General Dodge's address, as a more complete account of the construction of the road than anything to be found elsewhere on the subject: —

"Turn with me," he says, "to the first volume of General Sherman's memoirs, page 79, where he says: —

"'Shortly after returning from Monterey, I was sent to General Smith up to Sacramento City to instruct Lieutenants Warner and Williamson, of the engineers, to push their surveys of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, for the purpose of ascertaining the possibility of passing that range by a railroad, a subject that then elicited universal interest. It was generally assumed that such a road could not be made along any of the immigrant roads then in use, and Warner's orders were to look farther north up the Feather River, or some of its tributaries. Warner was engaged in this survey during the summer and fall of 1849, and had explored to the very end of Goose Lake, the source of Feather River, when this officer's career was terminated by death in battle with the Indians.'

"He was too modest to add, as I have no doubt was the fact, that those instructions were sent at his own suggestion; that was the first exploring party ever sent into the field for the special purpose of ascertaining the feasibility of constructing a railway on a portion of the line of one of the transcontinental routes, and that the exploration preceded by at least four years the act of Congress making appropriations 'for explorations and surveys for a railroad route from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean,' the earlier fruits of which were embodied in thirteen ponderous volumes, printed at the expense of the government.

"And still further. The interest thus early manifested continuing with unabated force was signalized in the closing days of his official life by a summary of transcontinental railroad construction up to that date, 1883, so exhaustive as to the leading facts that I am at a loss touching the scope he expects me to give to this paper. This summary may be found in General Sherman's last report to the Secretary of War, including the exhaustive statistics of Colonel Poe. (Ex. Doc. 1, Part 2, Forty-eighth Congress, 1st Session, pages 46, 47, and 253–317.)

"Under all circumstances, therefore, I must assume that he expects me to confine my remarks to something of an elaboration of the details of the construction of those lines with which I was personally identified, more especially that which first of all linked the two oceans together. . . .

"When I first saw the country west of the Missouri River it was without civil government, inhabited almost exclusively by Indians. The few white men in it were voyageurs, or connected in some way with the United States army. It was supposed to be uninhabitable, without any natural resources or productiveness, a vast expanse of arid plains, broken here and there with barren, snow-capped mountains. Even Iowa was unsettled west of the Des Moines River.

"It cost the government in those days from one to two cents per pound to haul freight one hundred miles to supply its posts ; and I was at one time in the country between the Humboldt and the Platte nearly eight months without seeing a white man other than my own employees.

"Now, from the Missouri River to the Pacific, from the Red River and the Rio Grande to the British possessions, the territory is all under civil law.

"The vast region is traversed its entire length by five great transcontinental lines of railroad. There is hardly a county in it not organized, and it is safe to say that there is not a township that is without an occupant. Its plains teem with all the products grown east of the Missouri River. It has become the great corn and wheat producing belt of the United States; its mountains are the producers of millions upon millions of the precious ores, and from every range and valley iron and coal in immense quantities are being mined.

"It is said that a railroad enhances ten times the value of the country through which it runs and which it controls, but the value of this country has been enhanced hundreds of times. The government has reaped from it a thousand-fold for every dollar it has expended; and the Pacific roads have been the one great cause that made this state of affairs possible. The census of 1890 will place, in this territory, fifteen million of people, and in twenty years it will support forty million.

"It is difficult, I doubt not, for you to comprehend the fact that the first time I crossed the Missouri River was on a raft, and at the point where stands the city of Omaha to-day. That night I slept in the teepee of an Omaha Indian.

"When I crossed my party over to make the first explorations not one of us had any knowledge of Indians, of the Indian language, or of plains craft. The Indians surrounded our wagons, took what they wanted, and dubbed us squaws. In my exploring, ahead and alone, I struck the Elkhorn River about noon. Being tired, I hid my rifle, saddle, and blanket, sauntered out into a secluded place in the woods with my pony, and lay down to sleep. I was awakened and found my pony gone. I looked out upon the valley, and saw an Indian running off with him. I was twenty-five miles from my party and was terrified. It was my first experience, for I was very young. What possessed me I do not know, but I grabbed my rifle and started after the Indian hallooing at the top of my voice. The pony held back, and the Indian, seeing me gaining upon him, let the horse go, jumped into the Elkhorn, and put that river between us.

"The Indian was a Pawnee. He served me in 1865, and said to me that I made so much noise he was a 'heap scared.'

"Within a radius of ten miles of that same ground to-day are five distinct lines of railroad, coming from all parts of the country, concentrating at Omaha for a connection with the Union Pacific.

"The first private survey and exploration of the Pacific Railroad was caused by the failure of the Mississippi & Missouri, now the Chicago, Rock Island, & Pacific, to complete its project.

"The men who put their money into that enterprise conceived the idea of working up a scheme, west of Iowa, that would be an inducement to capital to invest in carrying their project across Iowa to the Missouri River. They also wished to determine at what point on the Missouri the Pacific Railroad would start, so as to terminate their road at that point. The explorers adopted Council Bluffs, Iowa, as that point. All roads crossing the state for years ended their surveys at that point, and all roads now built connect with that point. These explorations, commenced by me in 1853, were continued each year until

ON THE SITE OF THE OLD TRAIL

1861, when the result was seen in the framing of the bill now known as the Law of 1862.

"After this bill was passed, the Union Pacific Company was organized at Chicago, September 2, 1862, and Reed, Dey, and Brayton made reconnoissances east of the mountains, Reed confining his work to the crossing of the mountains to reach the Grèat Salt Lake Basin. The effort to engage capital in the road was a failure.

"During these explorations, in 1856 or 1857, I happened to return to Council Bluffs, where Mr. Lincoln chanced to be on business. It was then quite an event for an exploring party to reach the States. After dinner, while I was sitting on the stoop of the Pacific House, Mr. Lincoln came and sat beside me, and in his kindly way and manner was soon drawing from me all I knew of the country west, and the result of my surveys. The secrets that were to go to my employers he got, and, in fact, as the saying there was, he completely 'shelled my woods.' President Lincoln, in the spring of 1863, sent for me to come to Washington.

"When I received the summons from General Grant, at Corinth, Mississippi, to repair to Washington, giving no reason, it alarmed me. I had armed without authority a lot of negroes and organized them into a company to guard the Corinth contraband camp. It had been severely criticised in the army, and I thought this act of mine had partly to do with my call to Washington; however, upon reaching there and reporting to the President, I found that he recollected his conversation on the Pacific House stoop; that he was, under the law, to fix the eastern terminus of the Pacific Road; and, also, that he was very anxious to have the road commenced and built, and desired to consult me on these questions. He finally fixed the terminus at Council Bluffs, Iowa.

"In the discussion of the means of building the road I thought and urged that no private combination should be relied on, that it must be done by the government. The President frankly said that the government had its hands full. Private enterprise must do the work, and all the government could do was to aid. What he wished to know of me was, what was required from the government to ensure its commencement and completion. He said it was a military necessity that the road should be built.

"From Washington I proceeded to New York, and after consulting there with the parties who had the question before them, the bill of 1864 was drawn. In due time it passed, and under it the Union and Central Pacific Railroads, constituting one continuous line, were built.

"In the fall of 1864, and after the fall of Atlanta, and while on my return from City Point, where I had been to visit General Grant for a couple of weeks, the commander-in-chief sent me back by way of Washington to see the President.

"While the President referred to the Pacific Road, its progress and the result of my former visit, he gave it very little thought, apparently, and his great desire seemed to be to get encouragement respecting the situation around Richmond, which just then was very dark. People were criticising Grant's strategy, and telling him how to take Richmond. I think the advice and pressure on President Lincoln were almost too much for him, for during my entire visit, which lasted several hours, he confined himself, after reading a chapter out of a humorous book (I believe called the *Gospel of Peace*), to Grant and the situation at Petersburg and Richmond.

"After Atlanta, my assignment to a separate department brought the country between the Missouri River and California under my command, and then I was charged with the Indian campaigns of 1865 and 1866. I travelled again over all that portion of the country I had explored in former years, and saw the beginning of that great future that awaited it. I then began to comprehend its capabilities and resources, and in all movements of our troops and scouting parties I had reports made upon the country — its resources and topography; and I myself, during the two years, traversed it east and west, north and south, from the Arkansas to the Yellowstone and from Missouri to the Salt Lake Basin.

"It was on one of these trips that I discovered the pass through the Black Hills, and gave it the name of Sherman, in honour of my great chief. Its elevation is 8236 feet, and for years it was the highest point reached by any railroad in the United States. The circumstances of this accidental discovery may not be uninteresting to you.

"While returning from the Powder River campaign I was in the habit of leaving my troops, and, with a few men, examining all the approaches and passes from Fort Fetterman south, over the secondary range of mountains known as the Black Hills, the most difficult to overcome with proper grades of all the ranges, on account of its short slopes and great height. When I reached the Lodge-Pole Creek, up which went the overland trail, I took a few mounted men — I think six — and with one of my scouts as guide, went up the creek to the summit of Cheyenne Pass, striking south along the crest of the mountains to obtain a good view of the country, the troops and trains at the same time passing along the east base of the mountains on what was known as the St. Vrain and the Laramie trail.

"About noon, in the valley of a tributary of Crow Creek, we discovered Indians, who at the same time discovered us. They were between us and our trains. I saw our danger and took means immediately to reach the ridge and try to head them off, and follow it to where the cavalry could see our signals. We dismounted and started down the ridge, holding the Indians at bay, when they came too near, with our Winchesters. It was nearly night when the troops saw our smoke-signals of danger and came to our relief; and in going to the train we followed this ridge out until I discovered it led down to the plains without a break. I then said to my guide that if we saved our scalps I believed we had found the crossing of the Black Hills — and over this ridge, between the Lone Tree and Crow Creeks, the wonderful line over the mountains was built. For over two years all explorations had failed to find a satisfactory crossing of this range. The country east of it was unexplored, but we had no doubt we could reach it.

"In 1867, General Augur, General John A. Rawlins, Colonel Mizner, and some others, crossing the plains with me, reached the point where I camped that night. We spent there the Fourth of July, and General Rawlins made a remarkable speech commemorating the day. We located there the post of D. A. Russell and the city of Cheyenne. At that time the nearest settlement was at Denver, one hundred and fifty miles away; and while we lay there the Indians swooped down on a Mormon train that had followed our trail, and killed two of its men; but we saved their stock, and started the graveyard of the future city.

"The explorations by the government for a Pacific railroad are all matters of official report, long since published and open to all. They were the basis for the future explorations of all the transcontinental lines, except the Union Pacific, then known as that of the forty-second parallel of latitude. That line, and the country from the Arkansas to the Yellowstone, was explored and developed mainly by private enterprise, and it is by far the most practicable line crossing the continent — the shortest and quickest, of lightest curvature, and lowest grades and summits. It is not, in an engineering point of view, the true line from the Atlantic to the Pacific, but in a commercial point of view it is.

"In an engineering point of view we demonstrated, before the year 1860, that the true line was up the Platte to its forks, to which point the Union Pacific is now built, then up (where the Oregon Short Line now runs) to the Columbia, and then to tide-water at Portland. The Union and Central were built for commercial value, and to obtain the shortest and quickest line from ocean to ocean. The line of the Central was controlled almost entirely by the development of the mining industries in California and Nevada until it reached the Humboldt; then its natural course would be to reach Salt Lake and the Mormon settlements. The Union Pacific objective point was the Pacific Coast by way of the Great Platte Valley and Salt Lake. . . .

"When we reached the mountains a series of questions arose as to how this base should be determined. The eastern base was determined by Mr. Blickensderfer, who was appointed by the government. After examining the country he declared it to be right at the foot of the mountains, where the heavy grades to overcome the first range, the Black Hills, were made necessary — a very proper decision. The west base of the Sierra was located near Sacramento, where the drift of the mountains reached into the valley, or where, you might say, the first approach to the mountains begins, but long before the heavy grades commenced.

"A good story is told, the truth of which I will not undertake to vouch for, in relation to the fixing of the base. By the original railroad act, as we have noticed, the President was to fix the point where the Sacramento Valley ended and the foot-hills of the Sierra Nevada began. Chief Engineer Judah, in his report, had designated Barmore's, thirty-one miles from Sacramento, as the beginning of the mountains. This corresponded with a decision of the Supreme Court of the United States, made in April, 1864, in the case of the Liedsdorff grant. The contestants of the grant attempted to fix the eastern boundaries at Alder Creek, eighty miles nearer Sacramento. This grant, by Mexican authority, was bounded by the foot-hills on the east. The Supreme Court decided that the foot-hills commenced about thirty miles from that city. Several attempts were made by Mr. Sargent, then a member of Congress, and since United States Senator, soon after the passage of the original act, to bring the attention of President Lincoln to this subject, but the President's constant occupation, with weightier duties forced upon him by the great war, prevented his action. The time came, however, when it could be no longer delayed.

"Owing to the increase of subsidy among the hills and mountains, it was important to the railway company that the foot-hills should begin as near as possible to Sacramento. The senator claims the credit of moving the mountains from Barmore's to Arcade Creek, a distance of twenty-four miles. His relation of the affair to his friends is this: Lincoln was engaged with a map when the senator substituted another, and demonstrated by it and the statement of some geologist that the black soil of the valley and the red soil of the hills united at Arcade. The President relied on the statements given to him, and decided accordingly. 'Here you see,' said the senator, 'how my pertinacity and Abraham's faith removed mountains.'

"Reconnoissances made in 1862, 1863, 1864, had demonstrated that a serious question would arise in reaching the Humboldt Valley from the western foot of the Wahsatch Mountains in the Salt Lake Basin. Should the line go north or south of the lake? The Mormon Church and all of its followers, a central power of great use to the transcontinental roads, were determinedly in favour of the south line. It was preached from the pulpits and authoritatively announced that a road could not be built or run north of the lake. But our explorations in an earlier day unqualifiedly indicated the north side, though an exhaustive examination was made south, and only one line run north, it being our main line to the California state line surveyed in 1867.

"The explorations by parties south of the lake, and the personal examinations of the chief engineer, determined that it had no merits compared with the north line, and on such report the north line was adopted by the company and accepted by the government.

"Brigham Young called a conference of his church, and refused to accept the decision; prohibited his people from contracting or working for the Union Pacific, and threw all his influence and efforts to the Central Pacific, which just at that time was of great moment, as there was a complete force of Mormon contractors and labourers in Salt Lake Valley competent to construct the line two hundred miles east or west of the lake. The two companies also had entered into active competition, each respectively to see how far east or west of the lake they could build, that city being the objective point, and the key to the control of the great basin.

"The Central Pacific Company entered upon the examination of the lines long after the Union Pacific had determined and filed its line, and we waited the decision of their engineers with some anxiety. We knew they could not obtain so good a line, but we were in doubt whether, with the aid of the Mormon Church, and the fact that the line south of the lake passed through Salt Lake City, the only commercial capital between the Missouri River and Sacramento, they might decide to take the long and undulating line; and then the question as to which (the one built south, the other built north, and it would fall to the government to decide) should receive the bonds and become the transcontinental line. However, the engineers of the Central Pacific, Clements and Ives, took as strong ground, or stronger than we, in favour of the north line, and located almost exactly on the same ground the Union Pacific had occupied a year before; and this brought the Mormon forces to the Union Pacific, their first love.

"The location of the Union Pacific was extended to the California state line, and that of the Central Pacific to the mouth of the Weber Cañon. The Union Pacific work hastened, and most of the line graded to Humboldt Wells, two hundred and nineteen miles west of Ogden, and the Union Pacific met the track of the Central Pacific at Promontory Summit, one thousand one hundred and eighty-six miles west of the Missouri River, and six hundred and thirty-eight miles east of Sacramento, on May 9, 1869, to the wonder of America, and the utter astonishment of the whole world, completing the entire line seven years before the limit of time allowed by the government. . . .

"In 1863 and 1864 surveys were inaugurated, but in 1866 the country was systematically occupied; and day and night, summer and winter, the explorations were pushed forward through dangers and hardships that very few at this day appreciate; as every mile had to be within range of the musket, there was not a moment's security. In making the surveys, numbers of our men, some of them the ablest and most promising, were killed; and during the construction our stock was run off by the hundred, I might say by the thousand. As one difficulty after another arose and was overcome, both in the engineering and construction departments, a new era in railroad building was inaugurated.

"Each day taught us lessons by which we profited for the next, and our advances and improvements in the art of railway construction were marked by the progress of the work; forty miles of track having been laid in 1865, two hundred and sixty in 1866, two hundred and forty in 1867, including the ascent to the summit of the Rocky Mountains, at an elevation of eight thousand two hundred and forty feet above the ocean; and during 1868 and to May 10, 1869, five hundred and fifty-five miles, all exclusive of side and temporary tracks, of which over one hundred and eighty miles were built in addition.

"The first grading was done in the autumn of 1864, and the first rail laid in July, 1865. When you look back to the beginning at the Missouri River, with no railway communication from the east, and five hundred miles of the country in advance; without timber, fuel, or any material whatever from which to build or maintain a roadbed itself; with everything to be transported, and that by teams or at best by steamboats, for hundreds and thousands of miles; everything to be created, with labour scarce and high,—you can all look back upon the work with satisfaction and ask, under such circumstances, could we have done better? . . .

"The experience of the war made possible the building of this transcontinental railroad, not only physically, but financially. The government, already burdened with billions of debt, floated fifty million dollars more, and by this action it created a credit which enabled the railroad company to float an equal amount; and these two credits, when handled by men of means and courage, who also threw their own private fortunes into the scale, accomplished the work.

"If it had been proposed, before the war, that the United States should use its credit, and issue bonds to build a railroad two thousand miles long across a vast, barren plain, only known to the red man, uninhabited, without one dollar of business to sustain it, the proposition alone would have virtually bankrupted the nation.

"Possibilities of finance, as developed during the war, made this problem not only possible, but solved and carried it out, and accomplished in three years a feat which no previous plan had proposed to accomplish in less than ten years; and while it was being accomplished, the only persons who had real, solid, undoubted faith in its completion were that portion of the nation who had taken an active part in the war.

"Necessity brought out during the war bold structures that in their rough were models of economy in material and strength. In taking care of direct and lateral strains by positions of posts and braces, they adopted principles that are used to-day in the highest and boldest structures; and I undertake to say that no structure up to date has been built which has not followed those simple principles that were evolved out of necessity, though reported against during the war by the most experienced and reliable engineers of the world.

"A few bold spirits backed the enterprise with their fortunes and independent credit. They were called fools and fanatics. Oakes Ames — the real pluck of the work — said to me once, 'What makes me hang on is the faith of you soldiers,' referring, at the time, to the support the army was giving us, led by Grant, Sherman, Sheridan, Pope, Thomas, Augur, and Crook, and all who had direct communication with us on the plains. There was nothing we could ask them for that they did not give, even when regulations did not authorize it, and took a large stretch of authority to satisfy our demands.

"The commissary department was open to us. Their troops guarded us, and we reconnoitred, surveyed, located, and built inside of their picket-line. We marched to work by the tap of the drum with our men armed. They stacked their arms on the dump, and were ready at a moment's warning to fall in and fight for their territory.

"General Casement's track-train could arm a thousand men at a word; and from him, as a head, down to his chief spiker, it could be commanded by experienced officers of every rank, from general to captain. They had served five years at the front, and over half of the men had shouldered a musket in many battles. An illustration of this came to me after our track had passed Plum Creek, two hundred miles west of the Missouri River. The Indians had captured a freight-train and were in possession of it and its crews. It so happened that I was coming down from the front with my car, which was a travelling arsenal. At Plum Creek Station word came of this capture and stopped us. On my train were perhaps twenty men, some a portion of the crew, some who had been discharged and sought passage to the rear. Nearly all were strangers to me. The excitement of the capture and the reports coming by telegraph of the burning train brought

Ames Monument.- Sherman. Wyoming.

all the men to the platform, and when I called upon them to fall in, to go forward and retake the train, every man on the train went into line, and by his position showed that he was a soldier. We ran down slowly until we came in sight of the train. I gave the order to deploy as skirmishers, and at the command they went forward as steadily and in as good order as we had seen the old soldiers climb the face of Kenesaw under fire.

"Less than ten years before, General Sherman had suggested a different method of dispensing with the Indian. Writing to his brother, he said: —

"'No particular danger need be apprehended from Indians. They will no doubt pilfer and rob, and may occasionally attack and kill stragglers; but the grading of the road will require strong parties, capable of defending themselves; and the supplies for the road and maintenance of the workmen will be carried in large trains of wagons, such as went last year to Salt Lake, none of which were molested by the Indians. So large a number of workmen distributed along the line will introduce enough whiskey to kill off all the Indians within three hundred miles of the road.'"

In speaking of the climatic changes incident to the building of transcontinental lines of railroad, General Dodge also says: —

"The building of the Pacific roads has changed the climate between the Missouri River and the Sierra Nevada. In the extreme West it is not felt so much as between the Missouri River and the Rocky Mountains. Before settlement had developed it, the country west of the Missouri River could raise little of the main crops, except by irrigation. From April until September no rain fell. The snows of the mountains furnished the streams with water and the bunch-grass with sufficient dampness to sustain it until July when it became cured and was the food that sustained all animal life on the plains, summer and winter.

"I have seen herds of buffalo, hundreds of thousands in number, living off bunch-grass that they obtained by pawing through two feet of snow, on the level. It was this feature that induced the stocking of immense ranches with cattle. Buffalo never changed the character of the grass, but herds of cattle did, so that now, on the ranges, very little of the bunch or buffalo grass remains.

"Since the building of these roads, it is calculated that the rain belt moves westward at the rate of eight miles a year. It has now certainly reached the plains of Colorado, and for two years that high and dry state has raised crops without irrigation, right up to the foot of the mountains.

"Salt Lake since 1852 has risen nineteen feet, submerging whole farms along its border and threatening the level desert west of it. It has been a gradual but permanent rise, and comes from the additional moisture falling during the year — rain and snow. Professor Agassiz, in 1867, after a visit to Colorado, predicted that this increase of moisture would come by the disturbance of the electric currents, caused by the building of the Pacific railroads and settlement of the country.[1]

"It must be admitted, however, that the growth of the once vast supposed relatively sterile region west of the Missouri River is not due in its entirety to the building of railroads, but that the idea of absolute sterility was a mistaken one; without a fertile soil and other possibilities for the advancement of civilization there, railroads would never have been constructed. The railroads have developed what was inherently not a desert in its most rigid definition, but a misunderstood region, which only awaited the touch of the genius of agriculture, made possible alone by the building of transcontinental highways."

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[1] The authors of this book both well remember when the sand-hills of the Arkansas River were, as their name implied, mere dunes of shifting sand. Now they are covered with rich verdure upon which thousands of cattle feed, and in the intervales are to be seen some of the finest fruit-farms in the region of the central plains. Whether Professor Agassiz was correct, or whether it is caused by great cycles of atmospheric variation, it is a fact.

But for the railroads the great central region of the continent would indeed be a howling wilderness. As the late Sidney Dillon, ex-president of the Union Pacific Railroad, wrote in a magazine article on "The West and the Railroads" in the *North American Review* for April, 1891, "Like many other great truths, this is so well known to the older portions of our commonwealth that they have forgotten it; and the younger portions do not comprehend or appreciate it. Men are so constituted that they use existing advantages as if they had always existed, and were matters of course. The world went without friction matches during thousands of years, but people light their fires to-day without a thought as to the marvellous chemistry of the little instrument that is of such inestimable value, and yet remained so long unknown. The youngster of to-day steps into a luxurious coach at New York, Philadelphia, or Chicago, eats, sleeps, surveys romantic scenery from the window during a few days, and alights in Portland or San Francisco without any just appreciation of the fact that a few decades since it would have required weeks of toilsome travel to go over the same ground, during which he would have run the risk of starvation, of being lost in the wilderness, plundered by robbers, or killed by savages. The most beneficent function of the railway is that of a carrier of freight. What would it cost a man to carry a ton of wheat one mile? What would it cost for a horse to do the same? The railway does it at a cost of less than a cent. This brings Dakota and Minnesota into direct relation with hungry and opulent Liverpool, and makes subsistence easier and cheaper throughout the civilized world. The world should, therefore, thank the railway for the opportunity to buy wheat, but none the less should the West thank the railway for the opportunity to sell wheat."

"Nothing now marks the spot at Promontory Point where the formal ceremony of driving in the last spike took place on May 10, 1869, and even the small station known as Promontory is at some distance from that point where the connection between the two transcontinental roads was originally made. The whole aspect of the country, from the Missouri River to Salt Lake, has marvellously changed. Where then were only tents, there are now well-built, substantial, and prosperous towns; and instead of the great desert wastes, supposed to be beyond reach of cultivation, one may now see an almost unbroken stretch of corn-fields and cultivated lands.

"The five or six hundred men who saw the junction made at Promontory Point were strongly impressed with the conviction that the event was of great national importance; but they connected it with the development of transcontinental communication, and trade with China and Japan, rather than with internal development, or what railroad men call local traffic. They were somewhat visionary, no doubt, but none of them dreamed that the future of the Pacific road depended more on the business that would grow out of the peopling of the deserts it traversed than upon the through traffic.

"It is not too much to say that the opening of the Pacific road, viewed simply in its relation to the spread of population, development of resources, and actual advance of civilization, was an event to be ranked in far-reaching results with the landing of the Pilgrims, or perhaps the voyage of Columbus."

The Great Salt Lake Trail is now crossed and recrossed by the iron highway of commerce. The wilderness is no longer silent; the spell of its enchantment is broken. The lonely trapper has vanished from the stern mountain scene. The Indian himself has nearly disappeared, and in another generation the wild landmarks of the old trail will be almost the only tangible memorials of the men who led the way.

The Devil's Slide. Weber Canon, Utah.

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